

HOLIDAY NUMBER

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

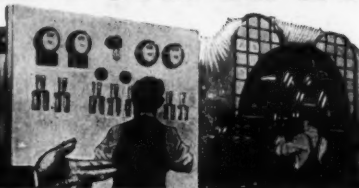
JAN., 1921

20 CENTS





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Vol. XXXII

No. 3

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

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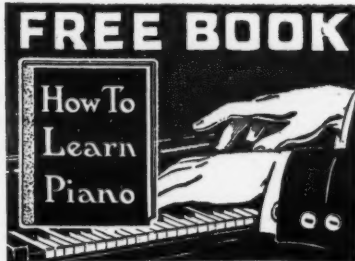


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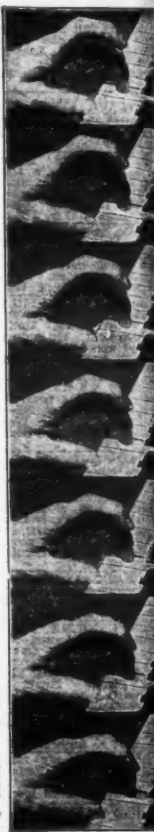
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The Secret of Earning Big Money

How It Brought This Man \$1000 in Thirty Days!

"MY earnings during the past thirty days were more than \$1,000" writes Warren Hartle, of 4425 N. Robey Street, Chicago, whose picture you see on this page. Yet previous to this he had worked for ten years in the railway mail service at salaries ranging from \$900 to \$1,600 a year. What was the secret of his sudden rise from small pay to such magnificent earnings?

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"I had never earned more than \$60 a month. Last week I cleared \$306 and this week \$218. You have done wonders for me." Geo. W. Kearns, 107 W. Park Place, Oklahoma City, Okla.

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And there are more—hundreds more. But now comes the most amazing part of it all! What these men have done, hundreds of others are doing today, and hundreds will do tomorrow. You may be one of them, for now the same opportunity that put these men into the big money class is open to you!

The Secret Disclosed

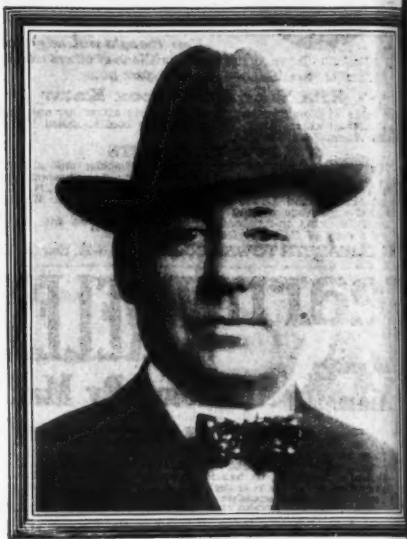
There is really no mystery about it. It is simply a matter of cold business fact. The "secret" is that the big money is in the selling end of business. And any man of normal intelligence and ambition can quickly become a Star Salesman.

If you had told these men that such brilliant success awaited them in the field of selling, they would have told you that it

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Warren Hartle

was absurd to think of their becoming Salesmen, for they had never sold a dime's worth of goods in their lives. What was it that suddenly transformed them into Star Salesmen? Ask them, and they will tell you it was "the N. S. T. A." that made them Star Salesmen and placed them in good selling positions through the Free Employment Service.

The National Salesmen's Training Association is an organization of top-notch Salesmen and Sales Managers that has fitted hundreds of men for big selling positions—has made it amazingly easy for them to earn bigger money than they had ever dreamed possible.

How? Listen, you men who sell and you men who never had a selling experience. There are secrets of selling that only Star Salesmen know; there are certain fundamental rules and principles of selling that every Star Salesman uses. There is a way of doing everything that makes success easy and certain. There is a secret of salesmanship.

You can learn the secrets of selling in your spare time at home—in the odd moments that you now pass fruitlessly. If you are earning less than \$10,000 a year then read the following carefully.

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The success of the men quoted above—and the success of hundreds of others like them—dates from the day they mailed a coupon just like the one shown at the bottom of this page. This coupon will bring you, as it brought them, an amazing amount of the way to quick success in salesmanship. It will bring you complete and irrefutable proof that you too, no matter what you are doing now, can quickly become a Star Salesman. It will bring you particulars of the wonderful system of Salesmanship Training, the Free Employment Service of the National Salesmen's Training Association. Surely you owe to yourself to at least examine the evidence. All that is required is to mail the coupon without delay. This matter is so important that you should do it now.

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 32

JANUARY, 1921

Number 3

The Woman in Port

By Lucy Pratt

Author of "Ezekiel," "Ezekiel Expands," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDGAR F. WITTMACK

Lovers' misunderstandings—who has not experienced them? This vivid story of two men, a girl, and the sea, has been imbued by its author with all the force, the depth of feeling, the simplicity and charm that mark a really great writer.

DAVID STANDISH was laughing. He was laughing at Miss Honor Borden. But there was little mirth about it, after all, as he assured her that he was going to join the United States navy and that there was no particular disgrace about it, either. He had always wanted to go into the navy! Ever since he hadn't gone to Annapolis! Nobody had ever regarded his college career seriously, anyway—and she knew it. As for this little go at the medical school, it had been worse than a joke, and she knew that, too. Oh, he understood! *He had been mixed up in an undergraduate rough-house!* Yes. It had been bad enough before, but now he had disgraced her. That was the amount of it, wasn't it?

Well, he was going to leave her. He was going to clear out altogether and leave her unencumbered. He had suspected for some time that that was what she wanted. The mess over at the hall wasn't the whole of it. And he knew about the chap who was butting in to take his place. That was her predica-

ment—wasn't it? But she didn't have to explain. No, he didn't want her to explain. He was going to leave her right now, just as free as she ever was, with apologies for ever having come her way at all.

"Good-by!" said young David Standish, his big voice wabbling treacherously. "You won't see me again."

She looked at him steadily. There was something about her steady look that made his eyelids flutter. "Good-by," she said.

He had glanced in on her again, from the hall, as he stood with his hat in his hand, and shook himself down into his overcoat.

"I shan't forget these three months with you," he told her, a dangerous reaction of tenderness upon him. "Of course it's all been a mistake—and you know it. Never mind. I'm going. And your latest victim from Seattle—can have all the encouragement he's panting for."

She was still looking at him steadily, but he left her then— He was on

the street, striding ahead under the high lights that shimmered down on him dully, while he tried to swallow something that caught dryly in his throat.

But he had meant what he said. Oh, yes, he had meant it! In fact he left his college early in the morning.

It was late March and he could hear the sound of flowing water; little streams that rippled along beside stone pavements. He stepped over them as he sought the car line. The morning breeze touched his face like a first liquid kiss of spring. There was a liquid smell about it that tended to relax his tautly strung nerves. There was even a first liquid note from a robin above his head.

"Great morning!" he conceded grimly, steering on with his heavy suit case. A gentle hand was pushing him always—from behind, and he wanted to hurry and get away from it. He wanted to walk straight, of his own accord.

That was the idea that possessed him during the days that followed, that he needed no assistance. He could do it *by himself*—with the United States government behind him. He'd had it in his mind, if they only knew it, ever since they had talked him out of Annapolis and sent him to Harvard instead. Well, he hoped they'd be satisfied with his Harvard record. At least they had had their way. And now he was going to have his, for a change, and see something of the world in the bargain.

He was glad that he could ship as



She looked at him steadily. There was something about her made his eyelids flutter. "Good-by,"

an ordinary seaman. At least he was old enough for that. And it was something to escape the training ship.

But his first days afloat left a mark on his brain which was never entirely erased. It was not that he was such a bad sailor, although the April winds were high, and the United States navy rocked on the upheaving waters of the Atlantic in a tiresome unrest. It was certainly not that he objected to being an ordinary seaman, either. It was a curious change to be sure, this being under dog to superior officers, this round of steady work, broken only by occasional battle practice, this being bounded on every side by a world of water—by encircling, never-ending areas of never quiet water—water—and no escape!

But he was going through with it. He had made up his mind to that. He had made a mess of things on land,



steady look that she said.

and he rather thought that he would make the best of them at sea. The fellows weren't such a bad lot. Not just the sort that he was used to, perhaps, but pretty good chaps, after all. He was quite sure that he would make the best of it all the way round, if it was humanly possible. But—oh, God! *Why had Honor Borden done him this way?*

Always it was his cry. It stirred dumbly, as he went the rounds by day, and it struggled up from him, in a hopeless revolt of bitterness, as he rocked dismally on his narrow berth at night. Oh, God above! The utter homesick, heartsick dreariness of it all! And she had made him believe once—that she loved him!

Oh, yes, he was going through with it. And he had a notion that he was handling it pretty successfully, on the whole. At any rate, he knew that he

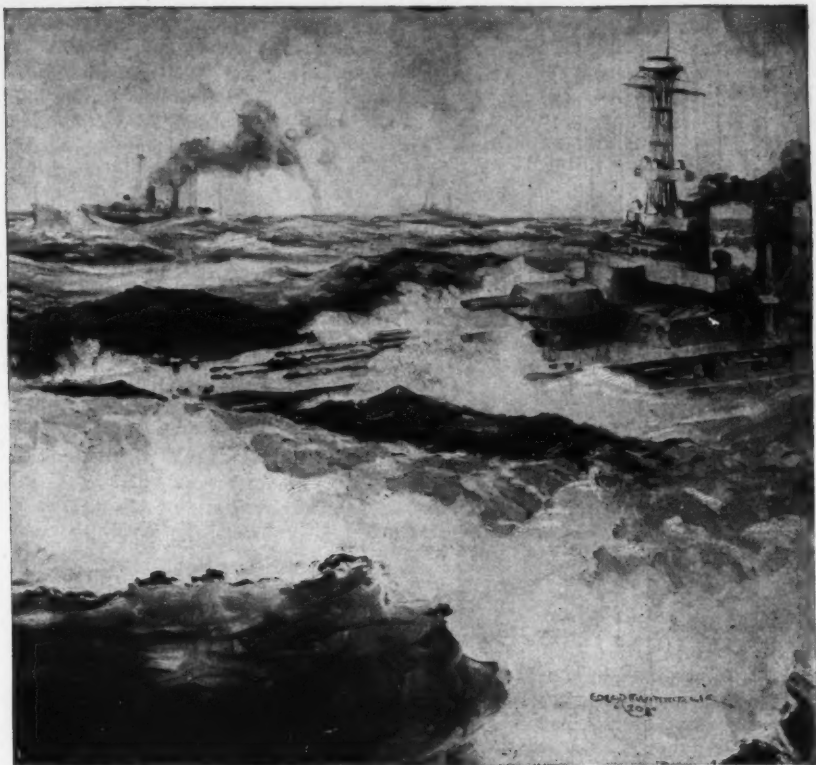
had had four months of it. Four months of endless cruising between the New England coast and Florida, four months of colorless drudgery as ordinary seaman, with never a foot in port. Midsummer hung over them, and they had decided to transfer him to a hospital ship. His brief career at the medical school was all to the good, then! D. Standish, ordinary seaman, was to take a turn on the *Floating Refuge*. He would be a hos-

pital apprentice for a space. He liked the sound of it.

It was a cheerless day when he went aboard the *Floating Refuge*. Uneasy, dark clouds hung low over the big, rocking house, with its cargo of sick men, and the sea churned high on the decks. He remembered the look of it, 'as it flung its leavings of froth at the windows guarding the hospital ward. He remembered the look of the commanding officer, the doctor in charge, as he went his rounds. There was a queer fascination about that chief of the staff, and the new hospital apprentice kept a furtive eye upon him as he strolled up to the boy with the nightmare, and reached down a clever white hand.

"Bad dream?" he questioned lightly.

He had a white skin, pitted with an occasional roughness, and a flash of white teeth, and a dry, black curliness



It was a curious change, this being bounded on every side by a world of water—by encircling, never-ending areas of never-quiet water—water—and no escape!

of hair, brushed hard and almost smooth across his forehead.

"Bad dream?" he repeated. It was his smile that made Standish want to look at him. There was a curious, dreary touch about it, a fleeting quality, and it had gone as quickly as it came. But it left its suggestion of some dark undercurrent, not easy to define.

"Thanks—doctor!" panted the boy with the nightmare, as the clever, white hand raised up his head. The doctor strolled on to the starboard window and looked out to sea.

Dark mountains of cloud still quiv-

ered above them, and men with flapping trouser legs steered past them, their eyes to windward.

"Gale's going to break on us in about four minutes," hazarded the doctor, as Standish picked up a tray of dishes from one of the beds at hand and went below.

He remembered, as he pushed on with his tray, that he had been afloat four months without running into a good-sized storm. He wondered if he was going to get full measure now. He reeled like a landsman, but still pushed on to the galley.

He came back outside. He only

wanted to get a general view of things, and he chose the windward side. He never had a very distinct idea of what actually happened. He knew that the gale had broken, with a howl of slaughter as it came, and that the big boat had become a small, tossed cradle and he a mere wisp of blowing straw. He had an impression of hearing voices bawling out loud orders, but they were drowned and confused. He was getting more or less drowned himself, for that matter, and very much confused. He was trying to get inside again. He would be all right if—he could just—get—inside—

But the wind picked him up then—and threw him down again.

The doctor in command was looking at him when he opened his eyes. He knew it was the doctor in command, because he remembered about the roughened whiteness of his skin and the dry blackness of his hair. Besides that, he caught his smile. It was quick, and it had gone again; but he had seen it.

"Feel better?" inquired the doctor casually, still looking at him. In fact, there seemed to be several of them looking at him, and he concluded that he was in the operating room. His head was bandaged and rather badly smashed, he thought.

"Better have stayed inside," suggested the doctor. "Not a particularly good afternoon for deck promenading. Headache? M—m. I suppose so."

He was in one of the beds beside the others that night. The *Floating Refuge* still rocked its load of sick men without mercy, and while the hammering of wind and sea went on outside, the dull hammer of pain was always at his head. Oh, Christ of the wilderness! Who had cast him adrift like this? Adrift on this merciless sea! Who had thrown him out into this hellish storm—with this hellish pain

grinding at his head—torturing him out of his reason! *Why did she do him that way?* Did she know—about the storm—and this hammer of hell—at his head? No—she—she would come—if she knew! She would come—through the night and the clouds—she would ride out over the sea—through the storm—till she *found him!* And she would reach down for him—with her arms—reach down with her arms—and there'd be her cool hand—on his head—and she'd throw aside that h-hammer of hell—and lean down and speak to him—lean down—and speak to him—*wouldn't she?* Wouldn't she—lean down—and *speak to him—again?*

"Hold on to me, son," came the low voice in his ear. "Steady—there! You're all right!"

He looked up.

"S all right, doctor!" he assured. "Good deal of—pain—in my head—that's all!"

He saw the chief sit down and lean forward, his knees comfortably apart, and examine him.

"Doesn't let up much?"

"Keeps right along at it," admitted Standish in a brave effort which broke wanly.

The chief fingered his little hypodermic tube.

"Just let's get at your arm," he ordered lightly. "Perhaps I can make you a little easier."

Poor Standish looked up with lost, hopeless eyes.

"Thanks—doctor——" he whispered.

He had come through it. In some way he had come through it, and the chief regarded him with a certain pride.

"A few days in the solarium, and you'll be a new man," he told him.

It was the sun parlor that he needed, that section of the upper deck aft, with its one continuous window going round it. The sea beamed at him from without, a warm, caressing light upon it.

Was it the same sea? It smiled at him from long blue stretches, from blue liquid acres alive with light. And he watched it by the hour. He was quiet watching it, always very quiet. The convalescents who lolled about him, or the passing doctors, interested him but little. Of course there was the chief. That was different. The chief always kept an eye upon him.

"Don't think too much," he advised briefly one day. The flash of his smile came with his words, and he stopped, looking down. "Don't think about her at all," he went on, his voice dropping easily. "Not worth it from any standpoint! Drop it. Can't you?"

Standish looked up, a swift, hot color in his face.

"No woman's worth it, you know." The low, easy voice went ahead rapidly. "You go through Hades to find it out, perhaps, but it's made plain to you in the end. And there's always somebody else that she'll desert you for. You find it out, son, whether you want to or not. I know all about it. It can wreck you—or leave you standing." He stopped again, with a slow scrutiny of the trembling boy beneath him.

"Give it up!" he ordered briefly. "Don't go under. Give it up! She isn't worth it, you know!" He flicked his clever, white fingers in a kind of fleeting disdain for it all and strolled on. There was a careless grace about his walk, and the boy in his chair by the window followed the crisp black head with passive helplessness.

He thought he would try to get well after that. He decided he would make a thorough business of it. He was both a well and a capable-looking hospital apprentice when they went into the Gulf Stream in October.

He liked the Gulf Stream. It reminded him of Indian summer at Cambridge. He remembered particularly the long, hazy day when the thunder of the fleet at battle practice went on

till evening. He remembered how the haze became a fog as darkness came on, a fog which deepened and darkened with night and finally brought them to a standstill.

He had seen the light, too. It was only a flicker, but it crept through the fog, a quivering signal of distress, and found its mark.

"We're wanted, all right," he said to the chief. "D'you get the signal, doctor? The fleet's going to hand us a sick man."

"M—m!" It was the only comment from the head of the staff.

But the *Floating Refuge* waited on the smooth, dark sea. The crew had gone aft. Already there were sounds of heaving at the windlass. And then the familiar Stokes stretcher brought up its quiet burden.

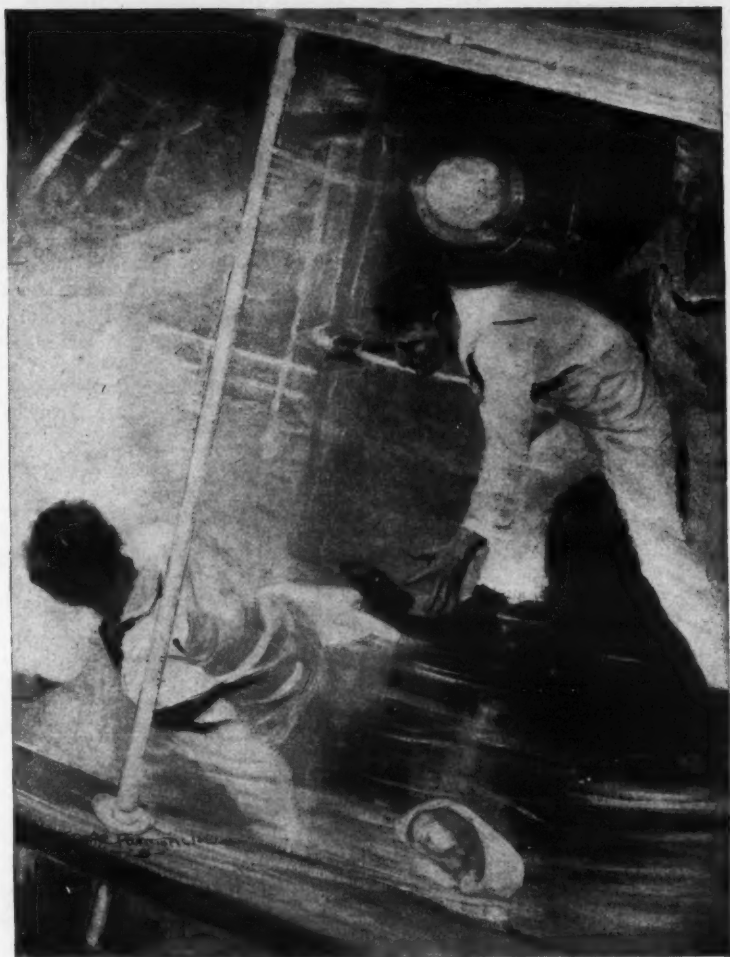
Standish watched him being put to bed. He was glad that they put him at the end of the ward, where he was more or less alone. He was not quiet, after all, it seemed. He had a wild, hunted look about him and a burning face. He resisted them and shouted strange things at them, and Standish followed his gentle-handed chief with proud eyes.

"What's the matter with him?" he had asked finally.

The chief looked tired out as he went below.

"Oh, brain fever very probably." He volunteered it like a guess of little importance. "He ought to have been sent in long before," he added in more reflective afterthought.

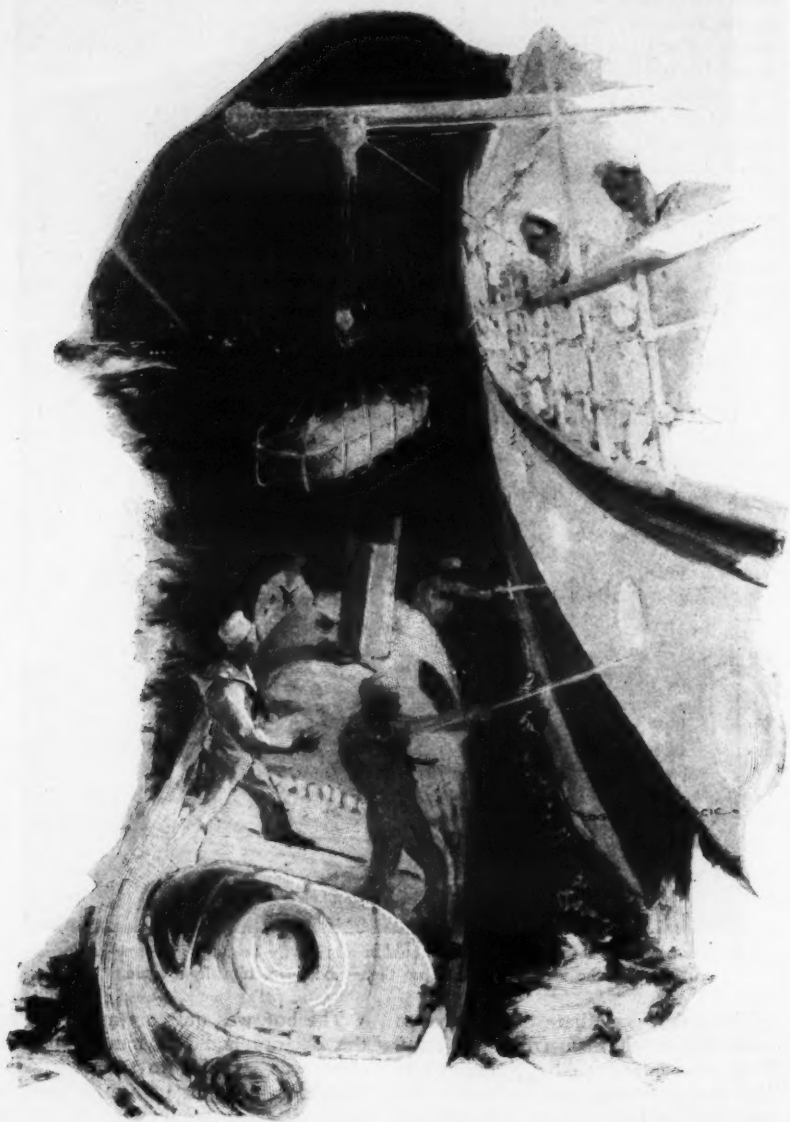
It was the night that stood out from all the others—the windless night when they drifted deep into the unspeakable silence of the sea, when they heard only the occasional pace of the watch outside and the restless breathing and shifting of the patients of the ward and the delirious cries of the wild-eyed boy who had so lately come aboard.



He was trying to get inside again. He would be all right if—he could just—get—inside—
But the wind picked him up then—and threw him down again.

The chief was there again, and so were the other men from the staff. They were interested, but Standish was both uncomfortable and alarmed. The new patient had curious intervals of lucidity when he appeared to *know him*. Standish cursed this life at sea, and obeyed when he received an order.

The boy was quiet by midnight, and the doctors had left him. Even the chief was strolling to the deck for a breath of night air before he went below. Standish would keep an eye on things for the present. Standish was all that was necessary during this lull of rest.



There were sounds of heaving at the windlass. And then the familiar Stokes stretcher brought up its quiet burden.

He heard eight bells strike clearly from amidships, and some one laughed in his sleep on the other side of the ward. The pace of the watch came in again from outside. He lowered another window and looked out. A warm south breeze was stirring now, and the wash of the sea came in like a lullaby borne up from the tropics.

But he was aware, as he turned around, that the new patient was staring at him, with wide, unblinking eyes, through the dim light of the ward. He crept back to the bed with unwilling feet.

"Feeling better?" he inquired in a professional and fairly cheerful undertone.

The unblinking eyes still looked at him, and the breeze from the tropics stole in from outside.

"You've been asleep, you know," explained Standish with successful ease. "Feel better, don't you?"

The eyes blinked just perceptibly.

"I reckon I've seen you before," came the faint, drawing tones. "You come from Cambridge—don't you?"

"I was at college there," returned Standish quietly. He waited.

"I played football—against you once——" drawled the voice again wanly. "You put me out o' commission. I don't guess I'd forget that—would I?"

Standish threw down a vivid look. It was a professional lapse, and he recollected himself.

"I was at West Point—then."

"M—m," agreed the assistant physician. "Better take another snooze now." He felt with passable dexterity for the wrist beneath the clothes.

"My home's in Kentucky!" confided the poor husk of a voice, almost eagerly. "But I'm acquainted with a few o' the folks up there in Massachusetts—too."

"Better not talk now," muttered Standish. "Better for you to go to

sleep. You've been pretty sick, you know."

"I reckon I know all about that," surmised the tired voice. — "I know I'm done fo'—too. So there's nuthin' more for a man to worry about, is there?" He turned his head almost sharply on the pillow.

"Will you do me a favor?" he asked suddenly.

"If I'm able to," agreed Standish, feeling strangely helpless.

"There's a girl—back there in Massachusetts—that I've lately been writin' a letter to," he confessed more slowly. "I'd be mighty glad—if you'd deliver her that letter."

Standish resigned all professionalism. "Sure, I will!" he promised softly.

"It's the girl I love," finished the sick boy simply.

Standish only looked down.

"I love her mo' every day—I reckon. But I've lost her——"

The face on the pillow no longer burned with fever. It was white and wasted, and the chin trembled for just a passing moment. Then it relaxed again.

"It's a mighty relief—to know you'll deliver it—to her! It'll do me mo' good than sleep!"

"You bet I'll deliver it," soothed Standish. "Better quiet down for the night now."

"I don't expect I was her kind—that was the trouble." The boy from Kentucky looked up with weary, dreaming eyes. "Her people came from Boston—and round there—you know. And she wanted for me to know everything—like they do round there—you know. She'd laugh at me—and tell me the unifo'm an' buttons certainly *looked well* on me—but I must get an *A* or two in the midyears—to be the man she wanted me to be. I wasn't born with the same kind of brains she was accustomed to—but she liked me then, too. And I always felt just the same

way about her—after that first night—when she came down to the June ball!"

"Don't you care!" put in Standish in a husky whisper. "Drop it now and go to sleep!"

"I don't expect—I was her kind," insisted the poor wreck of a voice. "But I certainly believed she'd ma'y me—most any time—if I'd just get an *A* or two in the mid-years. That was last year—you understand. And I don't guess I could give you any idea—of the way I worked. I studied all time! All day and all night! I didn't eat mo'n enough—to keep me livin'. But I came through, too! I came through with *two A's*—you understand!"

He was rising up on the pillow, and his face was hot with color again.

Standish collected himself, and put him back with a firm hand.

"Good work!" he muttered. "Now you're going to *quiet down*, you know. I'm going to get the doctor now."

"No—you don't!" threatened the shaken voice. "I'm almost finished—and then I'm done! I tell you I got two *A's*—and I went runnin' out and wiahed her the news—five minutes after I knew it! I expected she'd send me a message back—and I watched for it all day—and next day—and next one, too! When it didn't come—I wrote to her all about it. The way I'd worked—you understand—and I sent it special deliv'ry. That was Friday. I got an answer in just a week—on a Friday—too. She didn't say very much—but she wanted me to come and see her. She wanted to talk to me—"

"I couldn't go to Massachusetts then—but I got off at Easter time, on the fo'teenth of April. She told me all about it then. There was somebody else—you understand! She was mighty gentle with me—the way she told me. Reckon p'raps—she was *sorry* for me. And looks like there was some reason for it—too. She was engaged sho

'nough this time—but it was to *somebody else*—you understand!"

There was a step, and Standish looked helplessly at his chief, who stood there looking down.

"The way of the world, son," said the chief quietly to the wide-eyed boy below. "But we must live just the same, you know! We must live, and come up standing."

He put the wide-eyed boy back on the pillow again, and took out his little hypodermic tube.

"Maybe so—doctor—" trembled the boy. "But I seemed to come near—losing my cour'ge—after that! I couldn't seem to get together again—the way I wanted to! I expect it was because it came—so unexpected. And I'd gotten—*two A's*—you understand!"

"I understand," echoed the doctor in soft, brusque tones. "I—understand." He punched lightly at the bared arm.

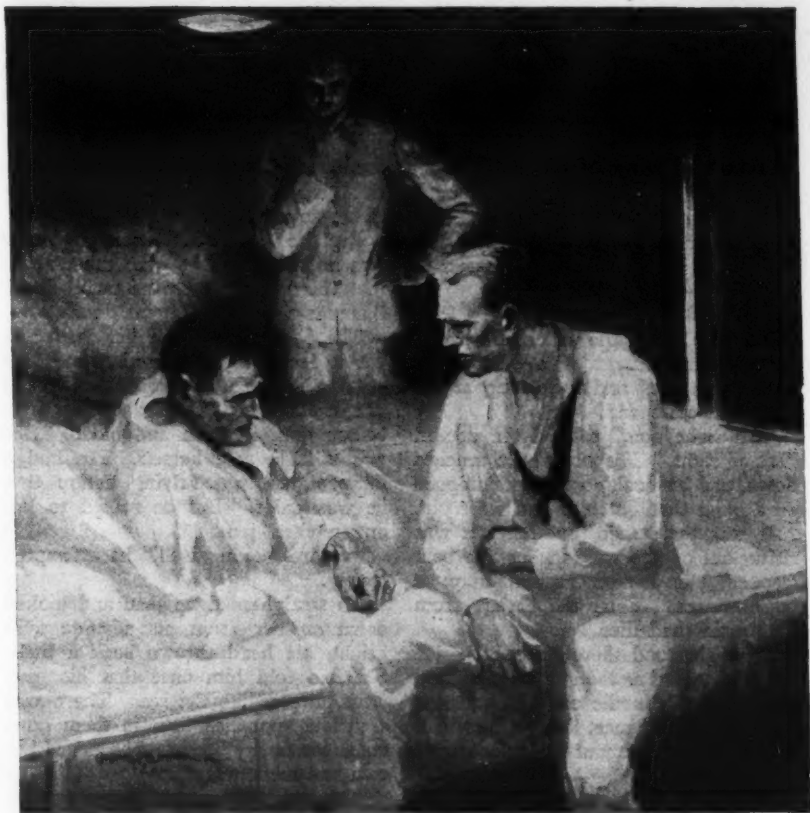
"I couldn't—seem—to get myself together—again—" came the wandering insistence. "And they fiahed me—in June. I hadn't much idea—where to turn next—till they took me in—in the navy—"

He gave a beseeching look at Standish.

"It's in my clothes," he explained, with a brave, level effort. "You'll find it there—an' addressed to—Miss Honor Bo'den—" he added faintly. "I expect you might be acquainted—with her—yo'self. She lives—"

Standish put out a hand. It groped for his chief, who met it with a safe, sure grip. His steadying word caught him like an anchor and held him there, until gradually he seemed to rise high above all the sickness and pain below him.

"Yes! I know her!" he assured in high, strained tones. "She—she had finished me off, too—when you saw her last April! She finished me off—in



"There was somebody else—you understand! She was mighty gentle with me—the way she told me. Reckon p'raps—she was *sorry* for me."

March! We—we're both open to congratulations—doctor!"

The boy on the bed rose up high, too, for just a moment, and then dropped back again.

Standish was steering his way very steadily to the door.

The doctor found him there, on deck, standing straight and looking out across the sea. The doctor glanced at him. Was there a flash of his dreary smile in the dark? No, the doctor was looking out, too, at the sea.

"M—m," he mused. "It beats against the shore in a great tide of passion, and then it shrinks back again—a quiet waste—like that! It's the way with us all. We beat out our tides of passion, and shrink back—beaten and wasted. And we either go at it again—begin it all over again, like the sea, or else we're worsted by it"—he waved a hand toward the door behind him—"like the little chap inside there, or else we gather ourselves together and come up standing—alone, and better men, maybe!"

Standish turned slowly, his white face smoldering through the darkness.

"None of it applies to me," he disagreed hoarsely. "I come out of it a sore, dangerous brute—that's all! You'll find out—before we g-get through with it—how—how I come out of it!" he threatened.

"Better go to bed," advised the doctor briefly. "'You lack the season of all natures—sleep!'"

At three, while the watch still paced, the broken remnant of a Kentuckian opened his eyes and looked up at the doctor in command.

"All right, son," calmed the doctor. "It's all right." His white hand reached down, and his cool, quiet finger stopped on a pulse that fluttered and went out.

It was three then, but the sun was rising out of the water when the boat stopped. It looked around upon a noiseless sea. Even the breeze from the tropics had died.

Standish stood there on deck beside his chief. And as the sun crept higher, quietly a still bundle crept lower as it went down to meet the sea, which slipped over it without a ripple, carrying it down—down—

But the little Kentuckian, who had won his two A's was gone, and Standish stood on deck and stared at the great liquid grave below him.

It was November when they dropped anchor at the port of Boston. And it was still early in the morning when Standish left the car line, outside his college gates.

He remembered that other morning when he had come away; the kiss of spring that was in the air, the note of the robin, the swelling life everywhere. Life had gone again now. The trees reached out their bare arms desolately, and dead leaves fluttered at his feet.

He attempted a careless nonchalance

of movement when he opened the latch of another gate. And as he waited for her, inside the house, he was on his feet, still attempting careless ease and drifting about the well-remembered room, his ears keyed to the faintest sounds as he tried to remember just what it was that he was going to say to her so undisturbedly.

But she was already coming. There was no more time to even think about it. There was no escape now, either. She was right there, at the door.

The bodily reality of her was confusing for a minute. He had seen her so long in the imagination that it was overwhelming to have her actually there before him, in flesh and blood. She was a little pale herself. He had a disappointed, unsteady notion that he was paler. But he rallied to her outstretched hand.

"You're looking well," he attempted lamely.

He straightened up then and looked down on her from his advantage in height, his head thrown back a little. She had told him once that his eyes were purple, like the sea. There was a curious, purplish light in them now, under his tawny brows. She raised her own and met them.

"Of course I wasn't expecting you exactly—" she began. "But I'm glad to see you, too. How does it feel to be back again?" she inquired with a bravely wrung smile. "Have you liked it as well as you thought you would?"

His answer was quick and nervous, and his hand twitched for something beneath his blue navy blouse.

"Oh, yes! It's been very interesting! I've enjoyed it first rate! But I've really just dropped in to leave a letter with you. It was written to you by a friend of mine—before he died."

She caught the handwriting on the square, sealed envelope.

"Did he die?" she asked suddenly, darting up a startled glance.

"Yes. He died in—" trembled the answer. There was something ominous about it.

She put up a hand to her cheek. "Oh, I'm sorry!" she whispered. She looked frightened.

"Yes, I think you'd be sorry—if you'd been there," he told her with the trembling sounds. "If you could have seen him—and heard him talk the night he died—you—I think you'd feel sorry!"

His color had come back and his eyes burned down on her out of his clean, wind-bitten face.

"You seem to feel very strongly about it," she suggested unsteadily. "I suppose he told you about—knowing me?"

"Yes, he told me about it," warned the big, shaken sounds. "And you're right to say I feel *strongly* about it! If you'd been there—perhaps you'd feel a little different—yourself. You'd understand a little better—what men are like—anyway, and that there's not room for them all!"

Her voice was a shattered remnant. "I think I understand that now, David."

"Well, there isn't room for them all!" he told her in a rising challenge. "And



"Yes, I think you'd be sorry—if you'd been there," he told her. "If you could have seen him—and heard him talk the night he died—you—I think you'd feel sorry!"

some of them go under! They go down to make more room for the ones who kick 'em out—and snatch their places from under their feet!"

"Why do you talk like this?"

"Why do I? Because I feel *strongly*, as you call it. *You* don't seem to have known—what feeling is. All I can say is—I wish you could have seen the doctor—out there on the sea alone. Never mind whether you know him or not! I wish you could have seen him, I say! It might help you. And I wish you could have seen little Kentuck—going down into the sea alone. It might make you perhaps—begin to *feel* a little. Anyhow, it's men like that I'm thinking about. Men who get pushed out to make more room—and who have to s-sail alone forever—or go down to feed the fishes! It's men like that—I've come back for. Are you surprised? Are you surprised that I'd like the job of killing the man who kicked little Kentuck overboard—so that he might have things to himself? Well, it's a job I'd like," added young David Standish thickly, "and I want you to get that very clear. *It's—a—job—I'd—like.* And—I'd make a good one of it, too!"

She looked at him in amazement.

"Is this what the sea does to you?"

"Just exactly what the sea does to me," he threatened. "Just precisely! You couldn't have sized it up better! As for the man you're engaged to marry—you—you'd better take care of him, that's all!"

"You can't blame me for being a little confused," she said finally, her voice dropping to an old low note that brought a new color to his face. "You're really very hard to understand, David. You're really almost incomprehensible, you know. It seems impossible to realize that you don't know that I've never been engaged to any one but you. But if it's true, I'll set you straight—right now. You're the one—who kicked little Kentuck overboard, as you call it. And you're the one who took his place."

He stood there staring at her, his arms hanging dead at his sides.

"Don't look like that," she went on steadily, the old low note haunting all her words. "I'm to blame for too much of it—myself. I'm to blame for more than you are. I was too fond of him. And I knew it after his midyear examinations. But I had seen you then. I knew you then—David——"

David Standish, ordinary seaman, raised up his head. He fancied that there was a great hush over the world; and his eyes furtively sought the window, where a thin, frost-worn bush dragged lightly on the pane.

"I told him—when he came up at Easter time. I told him all about it. The fact that you had gone off that way—with those crazy notions in your head—couldn't change things. And I was still engaged to you. Whatever you do, for that matter, or whoever you marry—it will always be that way with me. You were the one that he had to go away for, and—and you mustn't expect any change on my part, David. You mustn't—look for it."

Standish, in his sailor clothes, still stood there, and the frost-worn bush still dragged against the pane.

"He was—dear," she added, "and I'm not at all afraid—for him. I know that he's going ahead, with his little cunning smile, in a great deal better world than this"—she drew a quivering forefinger across her eyes, and then reached out gropingly for the forsaken-looking man before her—"while we stay behind and accept the things that can't be changed."

His arms trembled and she took up one of the limp hands in hers.

"You couldn't help it," she whispered. "And I couldn't help it. I tried. I tried not to——"

His arms lifted.

"But it was no use. Nobody—could help it!" she defended, catching for her breath against the blue blouse of the navy.



Equity of Redemption

By Philip Merivale

Author of "The Cromwell of the Caribbees," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

For sheer power and absorbing interest this story of a girl who was forced into marriage to a man she despised—and whose wedding day moved forward relentlessly to an unexpected climax—stands in a class by itself. It would be idle to compare it with the ordinary run of magazine fiction.

THREE miles from Harpleton, a fair-sized market town, the high-road passes Bowks' farm; from there it dips steeply and, about a hundred yards on, turns sharply to the left. At the bottom of the hill it crosses a stream whose stony bed runs nearly dry in summer. This is Catling Dip. On the farther side of the bridge the road forks, leading up to the church on the left and on the right through Catling Village to the rectory gate.

It is a tricky corner at Bowks' farm, with the sudden turn and the steep hill; and the bridge is only a ramshackle concern of wood with railings painted white as a warning to travelers, but offering little protection to any vehicle that should miss the fairway on a dark night. And it was dark in the Dip even on the brightest nights, with the depth of the valley and the high hedges and the great branching elms on either side of the road. This circumstance commended it to village lovers, who congregated every evening along the bridge rails, while more advanced cases betook themselves to the long grass and the deeper shadows of the roadside.

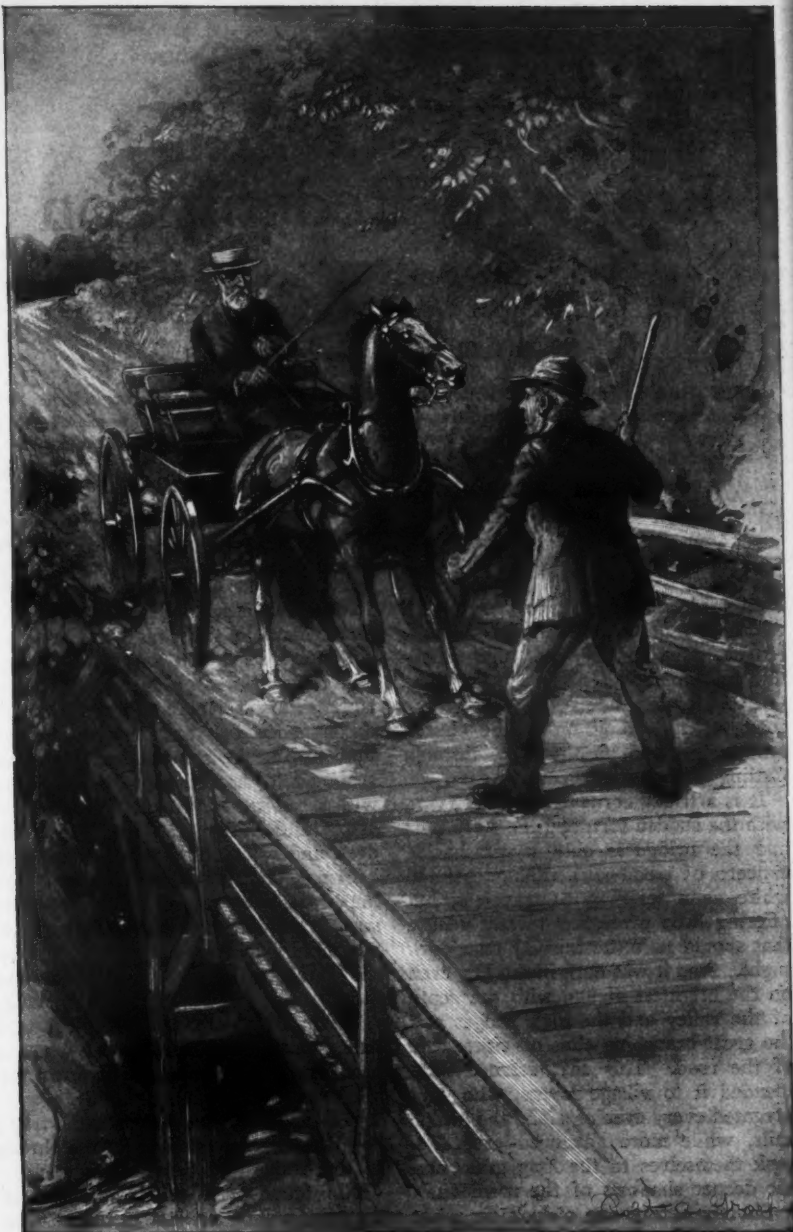
Shortly before one o'clock on a hot June day, Jacob Bowks was walking

across the bridge in the direction of his house. He was a thickset man, with a ponderous chest and barrel too heavy for his lower limbs, which had splayed out from the knees down. To assist them in their task he carried a rough ash stick, too long for a cudgel and too short for a spear—a kind of rudimentary quarterstaff such as his Saxon ancestors had carried. From time to time he stopped to remove his shabby felt hat and wipe his bald skull with a red handkerchief. His face was broad and heavy; the small eyes, set deep under a thick frontal bone, were brown and furtive, which, with the flat nose, long upper lip, and wide, straight mouth, gave it a simian aspect, an impression that was heightened by the fringe of gray whisker running from ear to ear under his fleshy chin.

He had just crossed the bridge and had paused to mop his head when a horse and trap trotted smartly down the hill toward him.

"Hi!" shouted the driver of the trap; but Bowks stood stolidly in the throat of the bridge and held up his stick.

"Confound yer!" cried the driver of the trap, pulling up just in time. "I'm in a hurry, Bowks."



"Confound yer!" cried the driver, pulling up just in time. "I'm in a hurry, Bowks."

"Goin' too fast down the hill," admonished Bowks in a thin voice quite out of keeping with his bulk. "'Ee've plenty o' time, pa'ason."

The newcomer muttered something most unclerical under his breath and glared furiously at his parishioner.

"See my boar at the show last week, Mr. Veringhame?" inquired Bowks, glancing critically at the mare in the shafts. "First prize. I can always win wi' pigs. Soon I won't bother wi' pigs no more, though. Common, pigs is. I'll go in for cattle. Guernseys I'll 'ave, or 'Olsteins maybe. Class, they are. And I'll breed 'em so's to beat 'is lordship up at Cambelton. I can beat the county, I can."

Mr. Veringhame jerked at his horse's mouth.

"Here! What do you want to keep me here to tell me this for?" he asked irritably.

Bowks laughed—a high, strident laugh.

"You knows what I wants, pa'ason," he said. "And you knows what'll 'appen if I don't get it."

The other looked sharply around. It was the dinner hour, and nobody was in sight.

"You keep a civil tongue in your head, Bowks!" he exclaimed.

Bowks' mocking laugh rang out again.

"No law agin' a man raisin' 'imself, is there?" he asked insolently. "I may be only a farmer, but I owns what I eats and what I wears. And a good deal more."

"You'll never be anything but what you are," said Veringhame. "And that isn't good enough. Understand!"

"Ho! Isn't it?" cried Bowks deservingly. "But you've been main glad to sit in my parlor and drink my liquor, 'aven't you?"

"Don't you presume on it then!" replied Veringhame angrily.

"Not but what we've missed 'ee these

last few nights," continued Bowks, unabashed at the other's contempt. "Me an' Alec Starey was sittin' till 'alf past ten t'other evenin' expectin' of you."

"I prefer not to come," replied Veringhame coldly. "Since you made known your confounded presumption I don't choose to have anything to do with you."

"No-o?" drawled Bowks in a malevolent travesty of Veringhame's voice. "Bit late to change your mind now, though."

"You keep your place for the future!" thundered the parson.

Bowks' apish eyes glittered as he advanced toward the speaker, shoving his great hand along the shaft of the trap as he moved.

"Tell 'ee what!" he said threateningly. "I'll keep my place, all right, an' I'll take an' keep yours, too, if you don't watch it."

The wide, straight lips were compressed so hard that the heavy chin beneath them was broken into a dozen deep wrinkles. For a moment the two men faced each other in ominous silence, the little eyes of the farmer twinkling and finally falling, extinguished by the blaze in the blue eyes of his adversary.

"That I will!" Bowks muttered, undefeated in his intention.

Mr. Veringhame raised his whip, and Bowks lumbered awkwardly back, his arm crooked over his head as if to ward off a blow; but the other only laughed contemptuously.

"I'll come and have it out with you to-night," he said. "But alone! Understand that, Bowks, confound yer!"

And so, flicking his horse across the rump, he rattled over the bridge, up the opposite incline, and round the corner to the right.

Straight and square for all his sixty-five years and accumulated worries, Mr. Veringhame drove those country roads like a monarch. A straw hat,

yellowed with age and service, crowned his majestic white hair, and his rusty black coat and faded check trousers could not conceal his still fine proportions or diminish the masterful carriage of his frame. Twenty generations of Veringhame were stamped in that hawklike face. It had glared from a steel camail at Acre and from under a sallet at Agincourt. It had died unwitnessed beneath closed visor bars at Bosworth and gone wind-bitten behind the banner of Rupert—that same Veringhame mask with the eagle nose and hard blue eyes that now went glowering between the hedge rows this hot June day.

For forty years Ambrose Veringhame had ruled the parish of Catling as parson and squire rolled into one, for the family of Caertherling, the lords of the manor, had been extinct a hundred years and their name perpetuated only in the corruption of "Catling" and the sign on Alec Starey's public house in Harpleton.

The rectory had been in possession of the Veringhames ever since the Restoration, when it had been awarded to a younger son of the house in return for the devotion and sufferings of the family. To retain the living it was necessary for one son in each generation to take Holy Orders. They were secular-minded men, the Veringhames, but where religion was looked upon as a profession inferior to those of arms or politics, but good enough for a younger son, it was not difficult to induce a young man, without other prospects, to undertake the duties of a country parson in return for a fine house and a substantial income. And so Ambrose Veringhame had not been conscious of any spiritual offense when, without taking his eyes or separating his heart from this world, he assumed the responsibility of piloting some three or four hundred souls to the next.

He would have been the last person

to permit discussion of his position, though had it come to the question, he would have scorned to claim a call to the ministry. He accepted the duties and rigidly observed them according to the forms and as far as the minimum prescribed. Beyond that he could not conceive any obligation. His rustic congregation got all the religion that was good for it. Services were held twice a Sunday; he delivered a sermon at matins, and communion was celebrated after the service. To demand more savored of papacy or dissent. No decent Church-of-England man with work to do of a week day ought to have time or inclination for more frequent devotions.

It is hard to dissociate discomfort from our conception of virtue; it would seem, in fact, to be the essential characteristic of virtue that it should be acquired with difficulty and retained at the cost of our comfort. A habit of virtue, then, would seem to be a contradiction in terms. Yet regularity is a virtue, and with Mr. Veringhame it had become a habit. For thirty years, with only rare lapses, he had driven off to Harpleton every morning at ten o'clock. At one he ate his dinner at home; at two-thirty he drove into Harpleton again, returning in time for supper at seven. Nothing but a funeral or a wedding was permitted to alter this routine, and since men live long in Catling, and since weddings were usually dispensed with until some informal union appeared about to be blessed with increase—in which cases the fortunate couple took care to have their banns read in another parish—it was seldom that he found occasion to vary his habitual program.

What he went to Harpleton for was a secret nowhere but in his wife's fond imagination. And the respect of the lower classes and the chivalry of the upper enabled her to cherish the illusion, even after all these years, that his



"It's fast, as usual!" she exclaimed. "I knew I was in time by my watch."

weaknesses went unobserved by any but herself and their children. Of these they had had five. Eustace, the only son, had been killed in the Boer War; the two elder daughters had married and gone away out of it all. A third daughter had died, and Amy, the youngest, still lived at home. Each of them in turn, as they reached the age of uncompromising scrutiny, around seven years, had asked their mother why father went away all day, and why he was so cross when he came home, and what was the smell that hung about his beard. To each she had lied, and by each had eventually been detected. After which the subject was never mentioned.

The best that can be said for him was that the inheritance in his blood of centuries of fighting ancestors had totally unfitted him for the duties of his living, even had he been more enthusiastic in understanding and more vigorous in discharge. The society of the coffee room in Alec Starey's public house, The Caertherling Arms, offered him something of the stir and action of life. There the farmers and well-to-do dealers met and talked of cattle and crops and horses. They were not his equals, but he found them better than nothing, and could not see that they had left him anything worse. Besides, brandy soon leveled class distinctions, and at the same time glorified in his

imagination the local topics of discussion until he could almost fancy himself participating in some such lofty events and historic debates as on a wider stage had engaged his ancestors.

It was in the first flush of his day's potations that he drove up to his front door, threw the reins to a groom, and, striding up the broken steps, made his way into the dining room.

He was standing ceremoniously in his place when Mrs. Veringhame entered. Her figure was stooped and she walked stiffly, being slightly lame from rheumatism, but her faded features retained, in spite of wrinkles and pallor, something of their old beauty. She took her place opposite her lord.

"I'm afraid Amy will be late," she said apologetically. "She only came in a minute or two before you."

"I can't think why my children are always unpunctual," he complained. "I'm not. We won't wait."

He pronounced a short Latin grace, to which Mrs. Veringhame, though only vaguely understanding it, responded with an audible "amen." Dinner was of the simplest, but served with all the formality that Mrs. Veringhame could instill into the poor village girl who acted as butler. It was not that the child was incapable of learning the ceremonial, but she stood in such awe of the master that all her rehearsals went for nothing when it came to waiting on him.

The soup, however, had been successfully taken out when Amy made her appearance. She stood for a moment comparing her watch with the clock on the mantelpiece.

"It's fast, as usual!" she exclaimed. "I knew I was in time by my watch."

"Unfortunately, the soup was served by the clock," said her father dryly. "Better sit down before you miss the meat."

This was getting off lightly, and Amy slipped into her seat.

She was a typical Veringhame, though the strong, aquiline features of the male members of the family were softened in her to a delicate and less aggressive quality. Her nose was straight and fine, her mouth rather large but well-curved, and her blue eyes had less of the challenging glare than a cool and winning frankness. She wore her tawny-brown hair swept off her forehead and secured at the back of her head at just the right angle to emphasize its free and admirable carriage.

After his one remark Mr. Veringhame relapsed into his usual moody silence, and mother and daughter carried on a fragmentary conversation. Presently, however, Amy became uncomfortably aware that her father was scrutinizing her very particularly. Suddenly he put out his hand and stroked her bare forearm.

"Looking pale," he remarked. "Feel all right?"

"Yes, quite, thank you, father," she replied in some astonishment.

"The impudent dog!" he muttered.

After this he was silent for a while, and then, as if coming to a sudden decision in his mind, he raised his head and shook it violently.

"Thinks that of me, does he?" he growled. "Give me my sherry, Amy!"

"You've had your glass, dear," protested Mrs. Veringhame weakly.

"Give me another!" he commanded.

At a signal of assent from her mother, Amy brought the decanter and poured her father another glass. He put his arm round her as she stood by his chair.

"Want to go to London?" he asked.

His abrupt question took her by surprise. Visits to London were usually only extracted from him after persistent entreaties and were, she often thought, hardly worth the struggle to obtain his permission.

"You can wire your sister you are

going to stay with her," he continued, without waiting for her reply.

Dearly as she would have liked to go, Amy knew it could not be arranged as simply as that.

"Which sister?" she asked.

"Either. Both. I don't care," he answered. "I'll drive you in to the station this afternoon."

"But, dear," Mrs. Veringhame interposed, "Hilda isn't in town. She's gone to Norway with her husband."

"Then let her go to Ethel. One's as bad as the other, I should think."

Like most great organizers, he was impatient of criticism or obstruction from the subordinates responsible for the detailed execution of his plans.

"But mother will be all alone," objected Amy, rather half-heartedly, for she was anxious to go.

"Don't bother about me, dear," said Mrs. Veringhame.

"Do you want me to go, father?" she asked excitedly.

"Nothing to do with it," he growled. "Go if you want to."

"Why, of course I do!" she cried, throwing her arms around his neck.

Such a demonstration of affection was rare in that house, and she found herself unable to proceed with it. Her father relieved the embarrassment by pushing her impatiently away and restoring their normal relations. She sat down in her place again.

"I shall want some money," she said warningly. "About five pounds."

He glared at her. Any appeal to his purse enraged him.

"What for?" he demanded.

"For the journey, expenses, tips, and things."

"Well, you won't get it. You talk as if money grew on trees. I haven't got money to pour away like that. Get it from your mother."

Amy flushed to the roots of her hair, and an angry rejoinder was on her lips when her mother leaned over and

touched her hand. Mr. Veringhame rose from his chair, and, bending his head, pronounced another grace in Latin, to which his wife loyally responded. Amy maintained a sulkily silence. Her father frowned at her and retired to his study.

Punctually, at half past two, the trap came around.

"Where's Miss Amy?" inquired the rector, as he climbed into his seat.

Amy thrust her head out of her bedroom window.

"I'm not ready," she said through the jasmine.

"Well, take the other cart," he retorted. "I can't wait. I expect you to go, mind!" he added as he drove off.

Amy did not go to London that day in spite of her mother's appeal.

"I'm sure your father wants you to go, dear," she pleaded. "And he will be so upset if you don't do what he expects."

"Then let him give me the money," replied Amy hotly. "I'm not going to ask you for it when I know how mean he is with your housekeeping allowance."

And from this position nothing would move her. To escape from further protest and argument she went for a long walk, hoping by air and exercise to shake off the sense of injury and disappointment. Her father's unsolicited offer to let her go to London puzzled her. It was so out of keeping with his usual selfishness that she could only suspect him of some ulterior motive; though he had partially retrieved his character by refusing to supply funds for the journey. Well, if her refusal to go interfered with his obscure design she would feel somewhat compensated for her disappointment. The mean thing! And then the contemptuous way he referred her to her mother for the money! Some day she was going to forgive him his meanness to herself, some day when she was married and



"Don't prevaricate!" he shouted. "I told you to go! I have reasons for the orders I give."

it would not matter any more that he had stinted her education, refused her pocket money, and grudged her clothes. But never would she forgive him his treatment of her mother. Never! Never!

She clenched her hands as she strode along and repeated "Never! Never!" and only realized she was speaking aloud as a big steel rake, drawn by a

large cart horse, came jangling out of a field into the road, and Jacob Bowks, from his seat on the iron saddle, called to her:

"Never's a long day they do say, Miss Amy."

She stopped instinctively to let him pass her, but he pulled up his horse, and, mopping his great hot face, remarked that it was warm.

Bowks had been a joke to her ever since she could remember. Her sisters had told funny stories about him; her brother, Eustace, had often entertained her in the nursery with imitations of the farmer, imitations whose force and veracity she had not appreciated at the time, but of which she was always now irresistibly reminded whenever she came face to face with the original. But though she was accustomed to look on him as a subject for ridicule, his presence always filled her with fear and repulsion. There were glimmerings in the apelike eyes and intimations in the straight, coarse lips which she was more unwilling than unable to interpret. He was staring intently at her now.

"'Ow you do grow, to be sure!" he remarked. "Every time I sees you I says to myself, 'Od she 'ave grown, to be sure!' Tall as me, shouldn't wonder."

She laughed a nervous assent. He had drawn his horse up across the road, and she was debating in her mind how she could ask him to get out of the way without hurting his feelings. The habit of persistent ridicule renders even ordinary contact with its object delicate and uneasy.

"Like pigs?" he asked abruptly.

"Why, no," she answered. "I don't think I do, Mr. Bowks, thank you."

"Prize pigs!" he urged. "Not ornery pigs, I don't mean. Prize pigs!"

"Not any sort of pigs," she repeated, repressing a hysterical inclination to laugh.

"They're all right," he affirmed. "Keep 'em clean, they'll stay clean. Eat off the floor of my sties, you could."

"I don't think I'd fancy that," she laughed. "And now if you'll just move your horse a little, I think I'll be going on."

"Well, cattle, then!" he exclaimed anxiously. "'Ow d'you fancy that? The best in the county I could 'ave.

Or 'orses, though they ain't the investment cattle is."

Mystification and impatience began to overcome the awe in which she stood of him. She laid her hand on the horse's bridle and wheeled him into the road. Bowks caught up the reins. As he did so she noticed that the fingers of his right hand were covered with blood.

"Goodness! What have you done to your hand?" she asked, forgetting for the moment her anxiety to escape.

Bowks held up the injured member and surveyed it without emotion. "This 'ere clutch is out of order," he explained. "'Er came down on my 'and as I was a-lettin' of the teeth down."

"But it's dirty!" she cried. "You'll get it poisoned."

"No," he replied tranquilly. "I've cureterized it."

"What?"

"Cureterized it. Lit a match and burned it. That'll keep it right till I gets 'ome."

She could not resist a feeling of wonder akin to admiration at the nerve of the man. For his part, both wound and operation had meant so little to him that it never occurred to him to make capital out of them. She was thankful afterward that he had not observed and played upon the momentary sympathy she had been unable to suppress for what she conceived to be his suffering.

"After all," she reflected, "he's more a monkey than a man. This proves it. They don't feel things as much as we do."

She slipped past the horse's nose and walked quickly down the road.

"I'm goin' your way, Miss Amy!" he called after her.

"In a hurry!" she shouted back over her shoulder.

He whipped up his horse, but the clutch slipped again, letting the long steel teeth of the rake fall down with

a clang; and as he climbed laboriously down to attend to it, she disappeared.

"All right now, my beauty!" he muttered. "But you wait! Just you wait!"

When Amy arrived home she found her mother gone to bed with a sick headache. After seeing to her wants she had some tea, and then, rather than face her father at supper alone, remained reading in her room till dusk, when she went to bed.

So Mr. Veringhame had his supper alone, which he would have liked to resent aloud, only there was none to listen to him. After he had finished, he lit a cigar and strolled up to Bowks' farm to keep his appointment with the proprietor.

The farmhouse was a small, red-brick building of one story, standing fifty or sixty yards back from the road in a corner of a field. The front door was placed flush with the wall in the middle between two windows. Three windows pierced the wall on the floor above. Even the creepers which grew luxuriantly over it could not redeem the bare ugliness of its lines. It furnished the first necessities of shelter and had no more pretensions to decoration than a hencoop. Inside, it was hardly more inviting. The furniture was old, and Bowks had added nothing to it since, at his father's death, it had come into his possession. Two much-worn arm-chairs by the narrow grate still bore in their broken springs mute testimony to the substance of two generations of Bowks. The wall paper was peeling off in places, and where it still adhered was scarcely relieved by enlarged photographs of various members of the family in strained, unnatural attitudes.

Bowks welcomed his guest at the door.

"Right into the parlor, sir!" he exclaimed as genially as possible. "And sit down. I'll be with 'ee in a minute."

Mr. Veringhame took a seat, and Bowks presently followed with a lamp.

"More cheerfullike," he said, turning up the wick.

"I hate the smell of oil!" grumbled Mr. Veringhame.

"Can't afford candles like you folk," replied Bowks. "But we'll take the taste of oil out of your mouth, pa'ason."

He went to a cupboard and produced a bottle and glasses.

"This brandy come from his lordship's sale!" he observed with pride. "Alec Starey advised me to buy it. Six guineas a case it's worth. But I never paid that. 'Twill be worth ten in twenty years, if it ain't all drunk by then."

Mr. Veringhame put down his glass, wiped his beard, and waved the topic away with his pocket handkerchief.

"What have you got to say?" he demanded peremptorily.

Bowks took the cue from him. If the rector declined to come discreetly and amicably to the discussion it was his own fault.

"It's come to this," he said emphatically. "I've give you all the rope as I means to give. I'm goin' to foreclose on yer. That's settled."

Veringhame threw one leg impatiently over the other, pulled at his beard, and said nothing.

"You sit there in your mighty rage," Bowks went on, "and think you can't be touched. You can go on in the old house world without end, you thinks. We'll see. I'll take that to court. I ain't sure but what you've been breakin' the law, mortgagin' the glebe lands to me."

He fixed his beady eyes menacingly on Veringhame.

"You should have found that out before," said the rector acidly. "It may be you won't be able to touch 'em, even if you do foreclose."

"I don't want 'em!" shouted Bowks triumphantly. "I got all the land I want. I don't value my title to 'em. I can take the matter to court, and

take you to court; and I can lose money. But you can't. You can't afford to lose money, and you can't afford to go to court. But you'll 'ave to, and the bishop'll 'ave to take notice of you, and 'igh time, too! You been a scandal to the Church, you 'ave, and to the neighbor'ood for ever since I can remember. But I'll stop it. See if I don't!"

Veringhame rose to his feet, his eyes blazing and his lips quivering with anger. For a moment he could not master himself sufficiently to speak.

"You're a low, dirty rascal, Bowks!" he exclaimed. "How dare you address me like this? There's not a thing in my life I regret but having permitted you to be intimate with me. From now on I don't notice you. Get out of my way! I don't see you, you common beast!"

And he attempted to walk out of the room; but Bowks rose up and confronted him.

"No use talkin' that way," he said. "I may be common, but that won't signify, not in court, it won't. There I'll be as good as you—better. Because you've done me out of money as you can't find for to pay back."

The old man bethought himself and sat down again. Bowks leaned over him and was within an ace of patting him on the shoulder; but a glance from those furious eyes made him change his mind. He poured him another glass of brandy.

"You drink that up," he said encouragingly, "and let's see what we can do. I don't want to be unpleasant, not if I can 'elp it. I've too much respect for yer, I 'opes."

The brandy had the effect of pacifying Veringhame sufficiently to induce him to listen.

"Go ahead!" he muttered thickly.

"You can't pay," said Bowks genially. "Not in a 'undred years, you couldn't. And neither you nor I 'ave got a 'un-

dred years to live. You want to end up 'ere in Catling, where you was born; and 'ere am I, Bowks, 'ose father knowed your father, ready and willing to 'elp you be comfortable in your old 'ome. More than so," he added with a horrifying assumption of roguishness. "I'm ready to become one of the family, so to say; and, if I say it, I made a good son to my father and wouldn't be no worse to you."

He giggled as he spoke and, if the expression on Veringhame's face had been a little more encouraging, would undoubtedly have nudged him with his elbow.

"I'm a solid man," he resumed. "I'm fifty-two, but my father lived to eighty-five, and 'e suffered from rheumatism something chronic. I never 'ad nothing the matter with me. I'll go to ninety or ninety-five, shouldn't wonder. That'd be forty-three years. Time for a silver weddin'—no girl could ask longer, I'm sure. And I could do 'er proud," he went on excitedly, scanning the dirty corner of the ceiling as if rapt in boundless imaginings. "Proud! She should 'ave third maid, and a carriage, open flower shows, lay foundation stones. There's nothing I'd deny 'er—as is good for 'er," he added cautiously. "Now what've you to say against it? Costs you nothin', does it? And I 'and over all titles and papers between us the day of the weddin'. I wager you couldn't give me a weddin' present the worth of that! Eh?"

The old man's head was sunk on his breast. Bowks could not see what effect his words were having on him. If he thought the project acceptable to his visitor, he was roughly undeceived when Veringhame suddenly broke silence:

"You marry my daughter! What are you?"

The contemptuous disgust in his voice stung the phlegmatic Bowks to violence.

"I'm a sober and solvent man!" he

shouted. "You're a beggar. I'm honest, at least. But I wouldn't go bail for you! And my fathers were on this land as soon as yours, if it comes to family; but they worked it and made use of it. But you let it rot on you. And now, if you don't do as I say, I'll turn you off of it so there won't be any Veringhames on the land no more; only Bowkses. And I'll see whether that livin' don't properly belong to me, and I'll give it to any broken-heeled pa'ason as I choose."

Followed another long silence, broken now and then by a rumbling threat from Bowks. Veringhame, sitting like a senator of stone, betrayed nothing of his feelings. At last a cunning smile broke the line between his mustaches and beard.

"I couldn't let you know for a month, in any case," he said.

"Then I foreclose in two days," snapped Bowks. "Why, you might die in a month, the way you live. Sort of thing you would do."

"I tell you," said Veringhame, "I *can't* let you know. I've got to ask the girl, haven't I? And she's gone away to London and won't be home for a month."

Bowks laughed his high, sneering laugh.

"'Igh and mighty, ain't yer?" he cried mockingly. "Sittin' there and lyin' to me like a farm'and!"

"You be careful, Bowks!" Veringhame's voice thundered through the mean little room.

"Why, I spoke to 'er myself at five o'clock this afternoon," said Bowks, "and she ain't gone away since, I can swear, for I been watchin' the road and she ain't never come along. Here! Let's tell the truth at least!"

Veringhame faltered. The idea of sending Amy to London had occurred to him at dinner as a good means of postponing a settlement. Forty years of procrastination had taught him to

rely on this as an infallible method of avoiding responsibility. And as age increased it was only natural, the end being as it were in sight, to cling even more tenaciously to this habit. But if she had not gone, then the thing must be faced; and he was not prepared to face it. Why had she not gone? He had counted on her going. His anger at Bowks was mingled with a resentment against his daughter.

"I know nothing of this," he said. "I'll speak to you to-morrow. As to lying, there isn't a man on earth I'd descend to lie to; and if there were, you'd be the last. Now stand aside, confound yer, or I'll thrash you in spite of your age!"

And though he was fully fifteen years older than his adversary, he looked perfectly capable of putting his threat into execution as he strode past, erect and bristling, and out into the darkness. On he went in his magnificence, wrapped in an indignation that covered his wretched infirmities like a cloak. His daughter had disobeyed him; Bowks had threatened and insulted him; the world he lived in was tottering, but he would face the catastrophe in his fury. He passed like a wind through Catling Dip, a scorching wind that blew the groups of lovers into the remotest recesses of the hedge shadows, withering their feeble ardors with the breath of his passion. Up the hill and out of hearing went his vigorous feet till they came at last to his own broken doorstep, nor did they pause there, but carried him swiftly up the stairs to the door of Amy's room. He knocked. She slept lightly, and at once awoke.

"Yes? Who is it? Do you want me, mother?" she called.

"It's your father," he returned. "Put something on. I must speak to you."

Wondering what could have brought him to her door at that hour, she lit a candle and slipped on a robe.



Mrs. Veringhame again covered her face with her hands. "I can't bear to hear you speak so of your father," she wailed.

"All right," she said, and her father strode in.

"Why didn't you go to London?" he demanded abruptly.

She stared at him in complete bewilderment.

"Come! Answer!" he insisted.

She was fearfully fascinated by the gigantic shadow of him thrown by the

flickering candle. He had not removed his hat, and the shadow of it floated on the ceiling like a vast and threatening cloud.

"I didn't want to leave mother," she said slowly. Then, with more warmth, "Besides, it's no fun if you haven't any money."

"I told you to go!"

"No, father, you said I *might* go."

"Don't prevaricate!" he shouted. "I told you to go!"

She bit her lip and shook her head, too frightened to speak, but indomitably resolved not to admit his assertion.

"And I meant it!" he pursued, ignoring her gesture. "I have reasons for the orders I give. I had a most particular reason for this. Now you have disobeyed and must stand the consequences."

He did not realize how loud he was speaking. His voice rang through the bare old house like a trumpet. Mrs. Veringhame heard it from her room and came out.

"What is it, Ambrose?" she asked quietly. "Don't disturb the house, dear!"

"Why not?" he thundered. "What does it matter? My house is disturbed, threatened with disaster, and I am expected to keep quiet!"

"Come to bed, dear," she implored him. "Let's talk about it in the morning."

The old fellow's eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"My favorite child!" he exclaimed. "The last of them!"

The fate impending over his daughter and the indignation he had worked up over her disobedience were hopelessly confused in his mind. He stammered for words, but could not make himself intelligible. He suffered himself to be led away.

Later that night he managed to explain to his wife the situation. But for all his grief and genuine concern there came from him no word of remorse or self-reproach. He seemed unable to recognize that it was due to his long life of self-indulgence that this sacrifice was laid upon his daughter. And Mrs. Veringhame knew the uselessness of trying to convince him. For even had it been possible, it would not have relieved the situation.

"I went to her room," he groaned, "meaning to tell her to make up her mind to marry the feller. To order her to do it! But when I saw her, all style and breed and beauty, and thought of that clumsy hog—I couldn't do it. By God, Martha, I couldn't!"

She patted his hand soothingly. He was sitting up in bed, propped on pillows, while she, in a shabby old dressing gown, was seated in a chair at the bedside.

"But I don't know what will become of us if she doesn't," he went on. "I don't know, Martha. He's a bad, bitter brute. I nearly gave him a thrashing. I would have if he'd been a younger man. By God, I would!"

"There, there," she said softly. "You couldn't strike him, Ambrose. He's beneath you."

"It was his gray hairs saved him," the old man retorted. "I could have thrashed him for being a low hog, I hope!"

"Yes, yes, dear," she agreed. "He's too old to hit. We must be chivalrous."

"But I told him what I thought of him for his presumption. Only he has the whip hand and he'll drive us to ruin."

"Don't you worry, Ambrose," she said, with all the confidence she could assume. "It'll all come right."

She succeeded at last in getting the excited old man to sleep, and then lay awake beside him till it was time to get up again, time to break the news to Amy, as she had promised she would.

But as if apprehending some explanation of the previous night's proceedings, and being anxious to avoid reference to them, Amy eluded all her mother's efforts to engage her in private conversation, and shortly after breakfast disappeared from the house. She absented herself all the morning and was returning in time for dinner when, passing Bowks' farm, she came

face to face with her mother coming out of the gate.

Mrs. Veringhame looked guiltily at her daughter.

"Whatever have you been doing at Bowks', mother?" asked Amy in great surprise.

"It's about the Caertherling pew in the church, dear," replied Mrs. Veringhame hastily. "It's been empty all these years, you know, and your father has just decided to let Mr. Bowks rent it."

"That was decided last Christmas," said Amy. "I heard father say so."

"Oh, yes, yes," agreed her mother nervously. "But I've just taken him the inventory of the things in it, the hassocks and cushions and so on. Quite a nice little house he has there," she added with forced gayety. "Very snug. He wants to make it a little brighter, poor man. I gave him some advice. I thought a new paper on the parlor wall, and some chintzes for the furniture—you like chintzes, don't you, dear?"

"What on earth has it got to do with me?" asked Amy impatiently.

"Oh, nothing, of course. I was just wondering if I'd done right in suggesting them. He wants to brighten the place. He says he finds it lonely—he thought of making it more attractive in case he should get married some day, perhaps."

"Married!" echoed Amy. "That thing!"

"My dear," protested Mrs. Veringhame, "we mustn't be contemptuous of any of God's creatures. He's a very hearty man, young for his years, and very rich. I think he's just the sort of man who ought to marry. He could support a wife very well, and has none of the extravagance and folly of younger men."

They had turned the corner and were going down the hill. Progress was slow on account of Mrs. Veringhame's lameness. After what seemed to her a suffi-

cient pause, she remarked innocently: "Talking of marriage, Amy, I wish you could make up your mind——"

But Amy cut off the remark with a peal of laughter.

"Mother!" she cried. "I do believe you have a plan in your absurd old head of matching us off. The last of the Veringhames and Pongo, the only man ape in captivity!"

Mrs. Veringhame stopped dead in the road and surveyed her daughter with a scared expression.

"What's the matter?" asked Amy.

"Does he really look very like a monkey to you?" she asked plaintively.

"Exactly!" said Amy vigorously.

"Doesn't he to you?"

"Perhaps, just a little," admitted Mrs. Veringhame. She sighed and they walked on in silence.

"Of course," she resumed presently, "most girls see these sort of resemblances to animals in men; particularly those who propose marriage to them. I remember I used to think your father was very like those lions with birds' heads you see in the British Museum. But that soon passes off. You don't notice it after a bit. You get used to it in married life. You have to."

"Mother," said Amy, a little shocked, "you're really making me suspect that Bowks has matrimonial designs on me."

"He has, dear!" said Mrs. Veringhame in a choking voice. All night she had lain awake revolving schemes of breaking the news, carefully prepared discourses on the obligation to parents, subtly contrived conversations leading to matrimony as the consummation of a girl's life. Little as they had satisfied her, they could not have been worse, she felt, than this blunt exposure forced from her by Amy's sarcastic remonstrance. And, glancing at her daughter, she observed with terror that she was scarlet with indignation.

"The impudent old beast!" cried

Amy. "Mother, you don't mean to tell me you let him speak to you about it! If father knew, he'd thrash him."

"Your father does know," gasped Mrs. Veringhame desperately.

"Mother!"

"But of course he leaves it to you, dear."

She had to take hold of the bridge rails for support; and there, now that the murder was out, she quickly de-

tailed all the circumstances. As she listened, Amy's face grew harder and whiter.

"Of course," her mother concluded, "I don't know the legal terms but it appears your father has made a mistake in business. The law is very difficult; lots of trained lawyers don't know it without a book; and it is possible that what your father has done may get him into trouble. At any rate there will be the exposure and disgrace. Such a thing never happened in his family before. He is in despair about it. We shall not be able to live here. We shall have no money. I don't honestly know what will become of us."

She fairly broke down and cried, her face hidden in her hands. Amy stood rigid and white beside her and could not offer to comfort her.

"He's an old man," wailed Mrs. Veringhame. "It'll kill him."

And still Amy made no response.

"Your father!" wept Mrs. Veringhame.

"He claims that now, does he?" said Amy bitterly.

Mrs. Veringhame raised a tear-stained face.

"My dear!" she exclaimed wonderingly.

"Yes!" pursued Amy. "He has denied us everything in childhood. We've had nothing from him that other children get from their fathers. He's made home miserable. Ethel said once that Eustace was the lucky one of the family, getting himself killed in the war. That was before she and Hilda es-



If she had not hated him so intensely she might have been touched by the rude, pathetic attempts he had made to brighten up the shabby little room.

caped by being married. And now he appeals to me to remember that he is my father to save him from the consequences of his selfishness and dishonesty. Well, I won't!"

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Veringhame. "He doesn't. Indeed he doesn't. He leaves it entirely to you. You don't understand him."

"I think I do," returned Amy. "He has asked you to try and persuade me so that he can preserve his dignity. It only makes it more despicable."

Mrs. Veringhame again covered her face with her hands.

"I can't bear to hear you speak so of your father," she wailed.

A horse and trap came around the corner.

"You had better come home, mother," said Amy coldly.

Before she could sufficiently compose herself the driver had slowed his horse and was approaching them at a foot pace. With a thrill of excitement Amy recognized her father. Now was the time to have the matter out. She would never be in better mood for it.

The rector eyed his wife and daughter with a searching glance.

"Get up!" he said shortly. "You'll be late."

Amy helped her mother into the front seat and climbed up behind.

"And please don't make an exhibition of your feelings in a public place!" he admonished.

"No, dear. I'm sorry," sobbed Mrs. Veringhame.

"What's it all about?" he asked irritably.

"Bowks!" replied Amy.

"You don't fancy him," said the rector. "I didn't expect you would. Neither do I. If he had been a man of decent family, I should order you to marry him. Being what he is, I waive the right to your obedience."

Amy felt inclined to retort upon this, but seeing the folly of beginning a quar-

rel on a hypothetical case, when they had miraculously agreed upon the actual circumstance, refrained.

"It's ruin for me," he went on. "But that's nothing to you."

"Ambrose!" cried his wife. "She is not so unfeeling——"

But he cut her short.

"I have given the girl the right to choose," he exclaimed, "and I'll abide by it! We must face the worst, and there's an end of it."

He drove a little way in silence, and then, suddenly raising his voice as if to be heard over a tumult of protest, shouted:

"Let no one mention it to me again!"

Then ensued three weeks of portentous and miserable silence, on which not even the arrogance of Bowks dared to intrude. Notwithstanding his threat of foreclosure, he suffered the time to elapse without making a move. He began, on the contrary, to exhibit symptoms of sentimentality that would have been ludicrous in a boy of seventeen, but which in a man of his years seemed rather revolting. He spent hours swinging with his elbows on his gate; he would moon of an evening through Catling Dip and past the rectory gates in the hope of catching sight of Amy. Altogether he expended a great deal of time and attention to no purpose.

Veringhame, on the other hand, preserved an unaltered demeanor as he passed strictly through the routine of his days. What tempests raged within him nobody could have guessed, since even on those outbursts of wrath which he had never attempted to control, he now imposed a rigorous restraint; and at a cost which later became apparent.

His sufferings did not escape the vigilance of his wife, and in the light of them, the delinquencies of forty years were forgotten. Her devotion redoubled and was aimed with such singleness of heart at his relief that no sacrifice, whether of herself or others,

seemed worthy of consideration. She began even to reproach her daughter for lack of duty and affection. She did not indeed give expression to this feeling in words, but none the less Amy was painfully aware of it. The uncomplaining, silent resignation of her mother's demeanor haunted the girl.

That Mrs. Veringhame should have entertained for a moment the possibility of this marriage had been a great shock to Amy. To her it had seemed ludicrous, unthinkable. In this attitude her father's expressed intention of 'dropping the whole project should have fortified her; but her mind was forever harking back to what she considered her mother's treacherous defection.

And the letters she received from her sisters in reply to her requests for advice only weakened her further. True, she had not dared to expose the actual circumstances of the case. She asked only for their opinion on material marriages; was it justifiable to marry for money? Hilda, who had married a rich man, replied that while it was conceivably possible to be happy without money if you loved a man enough, she had no ambition to try it. She found she had enough money and enough love to be as happy as she ever expected to be. Ethel, whose husband could barely make a living, was even more positive. "Nothing," she wrote, "but such a home as we had could reconcile me to the way we have to live now. I don't say 'marry for money!' But if you really love a man who hasn't a cent, don't let him marry you. On the other hand, it should be easier to learn to respect any one with money than it is to make money, or to live with a man you love without it—especially if you have three children."

Thus blatantly expressed, the common-sense view which both her sisters professed to take savored of rank cynicism. Yet Ethel, she knew, was a good wife and devoted mother. Was it pos-

sible that underneath it all she harbored regret, resentment even? Was there, perhaps, in every apparently successful marriage a submerged life of unexpressed and forever disappointed hopes? The material point of view, once placed before her, strongly re-enforced the other motives at work to disarm her resolution.

For days at a time she would go about in a kind of stupor at the thought of what confronted her. Then, suddenly, she would shake it off. After all, there was nothing to compel her to take the step. But the strained atmosphere of the house, her father's determined silence, her mother's patient eyes, combined to undermine this feeling of independence. Her world was waiting for her to act. They at least depended on her. How long could she refuse to assist them?

Then one day Mr. Veringhame was found insensible by the roadside. He had fallen from the trap; the horse was grazing quietly by his head. The laborers who found him brought him up to the house. The doctor diagnosed it as a stroke. Accustomed to the immediate and often violent expression of every mood that seized him, the restraint he had imposed on himself for the past weeks had proved too much for the old man, whose sole remedy for his increasing worries had been increased potations of brandy.

For three nights and days he lay, ashen and immobile, on his bed, his wife and daughter in constant attendance. During all that time Mrs. Veringhame never infringed the rule of silence he had imposed upon the subject of Amy's marriage, but Amy read in every look and in every tone of her mother's voice, a mute accusation. Sometimes as she surveyed the gaunt features on the bed she was ready to accuse herself. More often she rebelled angrily at the imputation that this was the outcome of her willfulness. But the strain of the past

weeks and the almost unceasing vigil by the sick man's bed gradually wore down her resistance, and on the evening of the third day, when Mrs. Veringham came to relieve her from attendance, she said:

"If he lives, mother, I'll do it."

Mrs. Veringham gave a low cry and embraced her; but Amy put her mother's arms firmly away and left the room.

The condition she had made exposed her to the fearful desire that her father might never recover. She realized that as she got into bed. Creeping out again, she knelt and prayed, confusedly, passionately, that he might be spared, that the sacrifice might yet not be exacted of her, that somehow all might come right for all.

The old man recovered. Slowly his iron constitution threw off this, the first, long-delayed attack to which his manner of living had rendered him liable. He received the news of Amy's decision without emotion of any sort.

The delighted Bowks was a good deal mortified at the conditions Amy attached to her consent. He was not to attempt to see her before the wedding which, moreover, was to take place as quickly and as quietly as possible. He had anticipated the thrills and glories of a long engagement. He had pictured himself driving his future wife about the countryside, the envy of all beholders. He had even thought of walking through Catling Dip with her of an evening to show those village swains that it was not for lack of opportunity or attraction that he had never had a sweetheart before. However, he had won the main article and could afford to dispense with the others. He went up to London and spent more in one afternoon on jewelry than he had ever allowed himself for six months' house-keeping. Amy threw it all into a drawer. His letter she left unanswered.

With the publication of the banns the

secret was out. Amy did not hear them read, but Bowks attended regularly. He occupied the old squire's pew in church, and from amidst the red curtains, carved oak, and armorial bearings his gross features beamed in perspirant triumph.

It must have been a terrible ordeal for the rector. As he read out in his great voice, "I publish the banns of marriage between Jacob Bowks, bachelor, and Amy Dampier Veringham, spinster, both of this parish," there was a flutter of excitement in the congregation, quickly suppressed as he lifted his head and flashed an eagle look in the direction of the disturbance.

"If any of you know cause or just impediment why these two persons should not be joined in holy matrimony, ye are to declare it."

For quite a minute he faced the people. Perhaps he was hoping for some one to protest. Then he snapped up the book, and in an unshaken voice gave out the hymn. For three successive weeks he faced the ordeal without flinching.

After the wedding Bowks drove his bride home through Catling Dip to the farm. She never spoke a word. Once or twice he attempted to draw a remark from her, as when he pointed with his whip at the railings when they were crossing the bridge, and observed that they were rotten. But she made no response. And gross and insolent as he had been with her father, there was something in the girl's demeanor which, coupled with his infatuation, awed him into submission to her mood.

Inside the house he became a little more sure of himself. If she had not hated him so intensely she might have been touched by the rude, pathetic attempts he had made to brighten up the shabby little room. The chairs wore the chintz covers recommended by her mother, of a violent color and design, but preferable to the dingy horsehair

they concealed. The ceiling had been replastered and the walls repapered with a pattern of some yellowish vegetable remotely resembling rhubarb.

He cocked his head on one side and looked anxiously at her for approval.

"Been and took all the pictures down so's you can 'ang your own," he said. "Mine can go upstairs somewheres."

She felt obliged to take some notice of his consideration, but could find nothing in her heart to say. She murmured a formal "thank you."

Slightly encouraged, he stretched out a great paw and touched her gloved hand. She withdrew it quickly.

"Let's look over the 'ouse," he suggested.

She suffered him to lead her upstairs.

"'Ere's the bedroom;" he said, struggling with a door still sticky with white paint. "'Er'll wear easy arter a bit, shouldn't wonder," he added, wetting his broad thumb and passing it up the jamb.

She entered the room. It was small and stuffy, the two casement windows being shut in spite of the heat. She opened one of them and leaned out. The smell of honeysuckle was heavy in the air, and the sounds of the farmyard from around the corner of the house filled the July noon with a long, sleepy murmur. The trees stood upon their dwarfed shadows; the heat shimmered before her eyes.

"Hungry?" inquired Bowks.

She shook her head.

"It's near dinner," he said. "I'll tell 'em to get it ready."

"I've got a headache. I would rather not eat anything," she protested. "I think I'll lie down for a little."

He looked at her in dismay. For a moment he was visited with misgivings. Nobody in his family had ever lain down in the daytime, unless to die, and, his recent vows notwithstanding, he was not prepared to be saddled with an ailing wife. However, he decided to in-

dulge her for to-day. Later on he would feel more used to his situation and would insist on her keeping up and about unless he had a doctor's recommendation to the contrary.

"Well," he said reflectively, "I 'ave some things to do. And I got to go into 'Arpleton to attend to some business."

He paused for a moment, leering at her.

"Thought as you'd ask questions, raise objections to that," he continued, somewhat crestfallen. "Most wives do, they say. But"—here he looked uncommonly sly—"you knows as you can trust your Jacob, don't 'ee, dear?"

This playful effort producing no response, he drew nearer to her.

"So give us a kiss and I'll be off!"

She stared at him in terror.

"What's to fear, love?" he asked.

"You be Mrs. Jacob now. You don't need to fear anything now. You be the richest lady in the place. And I be the proudest man," he added with an awkward attempt at compliment.

He stole up once during the afternoon. She heard the stairs creak under his weight and shivered as she lay on the bed; but after listening at the door for a minute or two—hours they seemed to the frightened girl within—he tip-toed off again.

The reprieve was only temporary; that fact she had to face. From the beginning she had indulged a wild hope or a fantastic faith that somehow the end she dreaded would never be reached. So far she had been able to defer the consequences of her decision. She had refused to see him, refused to wear his gifts; even since the wedding she had escaped his caresses. She had pleaded illness and so gained a few hours' respite. But postponement was at an end now. She could do no more. He was going into Harpleton and would come home in the evening. She had to face the fact that then there

could be no more deferment. Nothing could save her; not prayers nor entreaties, not feigned illness; nothing—unless in the next few hours she might die.

All the afternoon she sat at the window. She recalled how one hot afternoon in her childhood she had been forbidden to play in the garden until the shadow of the cedar had reached a certain place on the lawn. How slowly the black edge of the shadow had crept that day! Now, as she watched the shadows moving eastward and lengthening, they seemed to race. She could almost fancy she saw them move. If only the sun would stand still and the world be stationary at this hour forever and ever!

Toward six o'clock she must have fallen asleep. It was dark when she awoke. After a puzzled minute in which she strove to recall where she was, she sat up. It must be quite late! She had meant to listen for the wheels of Bowks' trap returning. Perhaps he had come back and was waiting downstairs for her to awake. She examined her watch in the moonlight, but could not read the time. While searching for the matches she heard a horse coming along the highroad, galloping. At that pace it could never, she thought, be pulled up in time to enter Bowks' gate. By leaning out of the window she could catch a glimpse of the road. Either the

horse was a runaway or the driver must be ignorant of the dangerous curve. As she strained forward a trap flashed past her field of vision. She thought she had detected, in the uncertain light, two figures in it, one of them standing and swinging his arm. It turned the corner without checking pace. She heard voices, cries of warning and alarm.

For a few minutes she sat wondering what it could mean to her. Her mind was preoccupied with apprehensions too grave to admit of sympathy



They drove away with a hilarious cheer from the rest and a good deal of humorous comment and coarse advice to the bridegroom.

or even curiosity. Some deeper instinct urged her to steal bareheaded out of the house and down the hill.

After listening at his wife's door, Bowks had decided to leave her to herself till he should have concluded his legal business in Harpleton with her father. An hour or two less, or more, meant nothing in the years of connubial bliss he was anticipating.

He found Veringhame in the coffee room of the "Caertherling Arms," in close conference with Drew, the lawyer.

"All 'ere," said Bowks genially. "That's the style. 'Ere we are then."

He produced the necessary papers, the signatures were affixed and duly witnessed by Starey, the publican, and one or two customers introduced conveniently from the bar. Veringhame pocketed the deeds.

"I 'ope you're satisfied, sir," said Bowks, holding out his vast hand.

Veringhame ignored him.

"It's a comfort," said Bowks expansively, "to feel that it's all settled so agreeable to everybody."

"If it is settled," said Veringhame grimly.

"What d'ee mean?" asked Bowks.

"I've been learning from Mr. Drew here," said Veringhame, "of the process called equity of redemption. Even after a property is forfeited, the mortgagor has a right to redeem."

"What you got to redeem?" cried Bowks. "You got all your deeds back. I don't lay any claim on your land."

"I must say, sir," the lawyer intervened, "that I don't see how in this case you have any need to consider the question of redemption."

"You may think what you please, sir," rejoined Veringhame caustically. "But I see no necessity for your saying anything."

Then Alec Starey congratulated the bridegroom, and Mr. Drew followed suit. With each compliment the health of the bride was drunk, then the health

of the bridegroom, the bride's father, the bride's mother; after that it was not thought necessary to particularize any individual subject for felicitation, but the drinks flowed continuously in a sort of general good will. Mr. Drew left before this stage in the proceedings, and Bowks made an effort to go at the same time.

"Mustn't be out late now, you know," he said with great importance.

However, he was persuaded to stay only five minutes longer, after which time he was ready to assent to Starey's solemn assertion that no man was sober on his wedding day who honestly meant to abjure his bachelor habits.

"She'll think all the more of yer," he said.

Mr. Veringhame watched the proceedings from a chair somewhat withdrawn from the rest of the company. There would have been nothing remarkable in this, which was his usual practice, but to-night they missed those arrogant interruptions and dictatorial utterances with which he was wont to conclude somebody else's argument or correct his assertions.

It was past nine, nearer ten o'clock, before Bowks could tear himself away from the company, and it was then evident he was in no condition to drive himself home.

Veringhame pushed his way forward.

"I shall drive you," he announced.

Bowks looked at the fierce face and some instinct of self-preservation stirred in the drunkard, prompting him to demur. But Veringhame would brook no refusal.

"I shall drive you," he repeated.

They drove away from the "Caertherling Arms" with a hilarious cheer from the rest and a good deal of humorous comment and coarse advice to the bridegroom. After that, what happened can only be matter of conjecture. We can picture the trap bowling along between the hedges under the

full moon which striped the road with inky shadows of the elms. Bowks was probably overbearing and insolent. Fuddled by liquor, he may have expanded vaingloriously on the events of the day. Pedestrians whom they overtook gave evidence that the trap was going at a great pace and that one of the occupants was singing in a loud and drunken fashion. It is unlikely that Veringhame paid the smallest attention to his companion's discourse. There was that in his mind which must have excluded all other matters.

Within half a mile of Bowks' farm he must have whipped up the mare, for they were going at top speed when Amy saw them. Past the gate they went at a gallop and around the corner on one wheel. We can imagine Bowks' terror as it began to dawn on his drunken senses that he was in the power of a maniac. Down the hill they crashed. Lovers in the Dip heard Bowks squealing with fear and saw the rector standing strained forward over the footboard, lashing the frightened mare. And so they came at full gallop to the bridge. Then Veringhame must have pulled violently at the near rein, for the folk on the road saw the mare

wrench suddenly around in her course and paw frantically in the air, Veringhame holding her up with a wrist of steel and cutting her again and again with the whip. Then horse, trap, and all crashed through the rotten railings into the river bed below.

At the bottom of the Dip, Amy saw figures running this way and that across the road, and heard their confused cries. As she reached the bridge they were lifting a man's form out of the water. She stood unnoticed while they laid him on the bank. The head dangled in a loose, horrible manner. The moon shone clear on the face of the man who had that day become her husband. She turned away in indescribable emotion, horror at his sudden end conflicting in her soul with relief at her own escape. As she turned they were lifting another body from the river.

"Doan't 'ee look, Miss Amy," said a girl kindly.

But Amy had seen. His neck, too, was broken, and from a cut in his brow the blood flowed over his white hair and ashen countenance. There was a dignity and a triumph in the dead face which seemed to forbid mourning or regret.

THE SOLOIST

THE twilight dropped her shadowed hood
And silent in the meadow stood.

Above the mountain's purple bar
Peered shyly down the dusk's first star.

And where the brooklet minstrels hide,
They laid their reed-strung harps aside.

The shadows ceased their ghostly dance,
Half poised like one strange spells entrance.

The leaves that gossip all the night
Were hushed as if with quick delight.

And all of this because a thrush
With golden prelude broke the hush!

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

The Last Sad Rites

By Ethel M. Kelley

Author of "An Engagement at Four," "Over Here," etc.

As central might have heard it had she "listened in," this short, sharp drama is unfolded over the telephone wires. Each actor is heard but for a moment in which his or her part is revealed, and then—curtain!

HELEN FARQUAR *answers the telephone and speaks to her daughter Muriel.*

No, dear. No, your father hasn't come home yet. I *expected* him home to dinner. Probably some business complication. No, I'm not lonely. I always have my thoughts and a book worth reading. Stay as long as you like, dear. Yes, a long letter from Maisie. She'll stay on with the Blaisdales. Remember what that visit meant to you when you were sixteen. You *were* just as pretty—but she's my baby. No, father didn't have time. He's not much interested in frills and furbelows. He didn't seem very well. He complained of his head. I try not to worry.

No, he hasn't once this week, but then neither have *you*, dear. When Maisie comes home I won't dine from a tray *every* night. Oh, I was only joking! I love you to be gay, you know that. Run along, dear.

Her daughter Muriel speaks to her uncle Henry.

Hello, uncle Henry! This is Muriel. No, I'm not at home. I've been dining with some friends, and they're going on to a little dance after. I just phoned. She's all alone. She doesn't *know* where father is. He doesn't take the trouble to let her know. She's so sweet she wouldn't complain. She sits up there evening after evening. Besides, he isn't very well. We've all been worried about him—and yet he won't stop his eternal business.

Oh! *Could* you? I knew you would if you weren't doing anything else. She'd love to have you spend an hour with her. I'd give up the dance, but she'd hate it. She *is*. She is probably the most *unselfish*. Yes, talk to her about it, if she'll let you. Tell her it isn't fair to any of us. She ought to *exact* it—don't you think so, uncle Henry? I'm getting awfully out of humor with him, if he *is* my father. Good-by, uncle Henry.

Uncle Henry to his younger brother Jim.

Keep on ringing, central. Mr. James Farquar's apartment? That you, Jim? Are you alone? Then I can talk with you. Muriel just called me. Worried about her father. Hasn't been home much lately, I gather. Health going off. The child's uneasy about him. Oh, Helen just sits up and waits for him. That fine mixture of fool and saint most encouraging to husbands like Norman. I don't *know* how much she knows. Perhaps more than we give her credit for.

What's that? Yes, it is. It's the same woman. I heard it to-day again. Norman's there all the time. Of course, he can't stand it. What's the best thing to do? That's right! Good idea! You do that, will you? I'm going around to see Helen. Good-by, Jim.

His younger brother Jim to Ward Egan, a close friend of the family.

No, I didn't think you rang, central. I'm calling a number. Is Mr. Egan there? Is that you, Ward? This is

Jim. Ward, I want a line on that Harris woman. Yes, *woman!* She's got him—for good, I guess, this time. I want to know if we can do it with money. Oh! She isn't? What kind is she? She *could* bleed him, couldn't she? What does she want of him, then? *Likes him!* The deuce she does! That's worse, and more of it. How do you *know?* Oh, Lucy. So she's *Lucy's* kind. That complicates it. I thought she was an out-and-outer. Norman's getting old. Yes, I know he's still handsome. He'll *always* have a way with women. He's got all the fascination of the family. Well, I'm no *Turk* 'tany rate. What would you advise? That's the way! You talk to Lucy. She knows about how the land lays. She's a sensible girl. If Harris is mushy, she might try the mother, home, and heaven dope. Well, we'll leave it to Lucy, old man. Good-by, then.

Ward Egan to Lucy Wright, a lily of the field, who yet does her own toiling and spinning.

Hello, Lucy. This is Ward. I'm glad you like my choice of spring flowers. Nice colors, weren't they? I've been busy. The market never sleeps. Well, I haven't been lately. Sometimes I think I'll get out—buy a grocery store or something. Never mind about me. How's Lucy? Flourishing? How's the crowd? Don't tell me you're not seeing Perry and Fred! Well, I thought so. *They* know a good thing. Oh! Soon—soon. Before you know it, we'll have a nice little dinner together somewhere. Say, Lucy, want to do me a *favor?* Well, it's rather delicate. I should have come to ask you, but there's a man coming in half an hour on business. Well, it's this: You know Leonie Harris? I know she's a friend of yours. They say she's a real nice little woman—but—yes—yes, you get me. His family might make it unpleasant. Isn't there some way to block it? If she's any like you,

Lucy, she's got a big heart. He's got a lovely wife and two daughters. It would kill 'em.

Well, I want you to get her on the wire, Lucy, *right now.* Tell her to send him home early *to-night.* Then to-morrow you go 'round and tell her what's what. She can't afford to. You know how to talk to her. You're the best ever. I'm crazy about you. Oh! Soon—soon! Good-by."

Lucy Wright to Leonie Harris, a weaker vessel of the Lucy variety.

Ring 'em again, central. It's a private number. Hello, is that you, Leonie? This is Lucy. Oh, all right, dear. How are you? So'm I. Tireder'n any dog you ever knew. Listen, Leonie! Have you got a caller? I thought so. The same one who was there last night? I'm going to frame this so's you can say "yes" and "no." Understand me? Well—will you do something for me, Leonie? Send him home early—to oblige a friend. I know it's none of my business, but I want you to. It's none o' *your* business, Leonie. That man's got a wife and a family—two girls that just about worship him.

Listen, Leonie, you don't want to ruin their lives. They're in society. The oldest one's going with a rich young man, and the little one's coming out next season. If there was a fuss in the papers—Leonie, you wouldn't want that for yourself.

The trouble is, you're fond of him—ain't it? You don't have to talk. I'm doing the talking. But, Leonie, *what* are you going to get out of it?

One reason I called you like this to-night was that a friend of the family called me. So you see they're *on*, all right—and out after him. You'd better get his hat on and bundle him out. I'll tell you what I know to-morrow. Will you do it? That's a good little girl. Good-by, dearie.

Leonie Harris to Doctor Branchcomb, the Farquar family physician.

Oh, Doctor Branchcomb? This is Miss—Mrs. Harris, of Blank Central Park. Doctor Branchcomb, one of your patients, Mr.—Mr. Norman—Farquar—Norman—Norman Farquar, has been taken ill here. I don't know. I don't know. He's—he's unconscious. He had just got up—to go—and he suddenly put his hand to his head—and fell! I—I can't get him up, doctor. Will you come? Will you *hurry*? He's—he's purple. Hot on the base of his brain? Cold on his forehead? I will—doctor—I will—if I can bring myself to touch him—again. I can't feel any pulse—oh, hurry. My God, doctor—hurry!

Doctor Branchcomb to Mrs. Farquar.

Mrs. Farquar, this is Doctor Branchcomb, Doctor Branchcomb. Thank you! I'm glad to hear yours. Mrs. Farquar, I know you're a brave woman, and a strong one. Will you brace yourself to hear some bad news? I'm sorry to do it this way, but I can't get hold of any member of your family. Yes—yes, your husband—is ill. Very ill. He was taken without warning. He is so ill that you must be prepared for any—Yes, Mrs. Farquar, he is—dying. Yes—he is dead. He died before I reached him. Are you able to hold yourself together while I tell you something that I want you to do?

No, he was not at his office. In his club. I am not afraid to tell you. I'm trying to think of the best way to do it. He died at the house of—a friend. Of a friend. Yes—a woman. A Mrs. Harris, of Blank Central Park. I'm telephoning from that address.

Don't stop talking to me, Mrs. Farquar. Oh! I know I can be sure of you, but I want to hear the sound of your voice. That's right. You are sitting, aren't you? Shall I go on?

I want you to help me think what is best to be done now. I have a physician's obligation to the authorities, and I must report it at once. There isn't any way of—suppressing it, Mrs. Farquar. In fact—the—Mrs. Harris lost her head and called in the neighbors. There *must* be publicity. Don't you see, the matter is public property—already? Well—my idea was for you to take charge here until we could have him *moved*. Is there plenty of *air* in the room you are in? I know you're not the fainting kind, but I want to be sure of the oxygen supply.

Could you nerve yourself for what I ask—could you? I knew you could be depended on. Mrs. Harris has her instructions. You *both* dined here, you and your husband. You left in your car to get your daughter from some place or other— Oh! The Harrisons' dance—and came back to get your husband. Meantime he had been stricken. Will you bring Muriel? No, I don't think it would be better to spare her. She's a woman. She's got to know. If she isn't, I'll make a woman of her. It wouldn't be fair to her not to give her a chance. They told me at his house that Henry was on his way to you. You'll all come together.

There's just one more thing. Can you hear me? I'm speaking low. Mrs. Harris—whose guest you will be—was *fond* of your husband. She had made up her mind to-night, she tells me, not to see him again—for your sake—and that of your daughters. You see, she deserves something from us—a little consideration, if we can give it to her. Oh! I knew you would see, and I thank you for that assurance.

No, there's nothing to bring, Mrs. Farquar. I've talked to a great many brave women, but— Yes, central, my party rang off, but don't call her.

The Lamp of Destiny

By Margaret Pedler

Author of "The Hermit of Far End," "The House of Dreams-Come-True," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

The Greatest Novel of the Year

How the Story Began

A wholly charming bit of femininity, Magda Vallincourt, a professional dancer, breaks hearts easily and unfeelingly. Her mother, embittered by her husband's unjust repudiation of her, had early taught her daughter to take, but never to give, affection and love, and this becomes for Magda her code of life. Once, as a child, after a severe punishment by her father, Magda had gone to dance the ache away in the woods. An artist, Michael Quarrington, at work there, had glimpsed her, and was enchanted by her whimsical grace. And, grown to young womanhood, though she has never seen Quarrington again, he alone of all the men Magda has known stands out—"Saint Michael," as she had dubbed him at their first meeting. Then, one day, after an accident to her motor car, she is taken by her rescuer to his home near by. He recognizes her as the far-famed dancer, the Great Wielitzka—Magda uses her mother's name in her profession. Over the teacups he arraigns her unflinchingly for the havoc she has wrought in men's lives. She listens, piqued that he should offer her frank denunciation instead of the customary male worship. Discussing virtue and its relation to art, he tells her of a little child whom he had once seen dancing in the woods, the perfect embodiment, to him, of innocence and artistic achievement. Immediately Magda recognizes him as "Saint Michael," but only when she is leaving does she reveal to him that she is his "little sprite of the woods." And in his cry of "*You! You!*" as she drives away, there is an infinitude of wistful yearning.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH a grinding of brakes the taxi slowed up and came to a standstill at Friar's Holm, the quaint old Queen Anne house which Magda had acquired in north London.

Once within the high wall inclosing the Old World garden in which it stood, it was easy enough to imagine oneself a hundred miles from town. Fir and cedar sentineled the house, and in the center of the garden there was a lawn of wonderful old turf, hedged round in summer by a riot of roses so that it gleamed like a great square emerald set in a jeweled frame.

Magda entered the house and, crossing the cheerfully lit hall, threw open the door of a room whence issued the sound of some one, obviously a first-rate musician, playing the piano.

"The Lamp of Destiny" began in the December number.

As she opened the door the twilight, shot by quivering spears of light from the fire's dancing flames, seemed to rush out at her, bearing with it the mournful, heart-shaking music of some Russian melody. Magda uttered a soft, half-amused ejaculation of impatience and switched on the lights.

"All in the dark, Davilof?" she asked in a practical tone of voice calculated to disintegrate any possible fabric of romance woven of firelight and fifths.

The flood of electric light revealed a large, lofty room, devoid of furniture except for a few comfortable chairs grouped together at one end of it and for a magnificent grand piano at the other. The room appeared doubly large by reason of the fact that the whole of one wall was taken up by four immense panels of looking-glass, cleverly fitted together so that in effect the entire wall

was composed of a single enormous mirror. It was in front of this mirror that Magda practiced. The remaining three walls were hung with priceless old tapestry woven of somber greens and grays.

As she entered the room a man rose quickly from the piano and came forward to meet her. There was a kind of repressed eagerness in the action, as if he had been waiting with impatience for her coming.

He was a striking-looking man, tall, and built with the slender-limbed grace of a foreigner. Golden-brown hair, worn rather longer than fashion dictates, waved crisply over his head, and the mustache and small Vandyke beard which partially concealed the lower part of his face were of the same warmly golden color.

The word "musician" was written all over him—in the supple, capable hands, in the careless stoop of his loosely knit shoulders, and, more than all, in the imaginative hazel eyes with their curious mixture of abstraction and fire. They rather suggested lightning playing over some dreaming pool.

Magda held out her hand carelessly.

"We shall have to postpone the practice as I'm so late, Davilof," she said. "I had a smash-up in the fog. My car ran into a bus and—"

"And you are hurt?" Davilof broke in sharply, his voice edged with fear.

"No, no," hastily. "I was stunned for a minute, and then afterward I fainted, but I'm quite intact otherwise."

"You are sure—sure?"

"Quite." Hearing the keen anxiety in his tones, she smiled at him reassuringly and held out a friendly hand. "I'm all right—really, Antoine."

He took the hand in both his.

"Thank God!" he said fervently.

Antoine Davilof had lived so long in England that he spoke without trace of accent, though he sometimes gave an un-English twist to the phrasing of a

sentence, but his quick emotion and the simplicity with which he made no effort to conceal it stamped him unmistakably as a foreigner.

A little touched, Magda allowed her hand to remain in his.

"Why, Davilof!" she chided him laughingly. "You're quite absurdly upset about it!"

"I could not have borne it if you had been hurt," he declared vehemently. "You ought not to go about by yourself. It's horrible to think of *you*—in a street accident—alone!"

"But I wasn't alone. A man who was in the other half of the accident, the motor-bus half, played the good Samaritan and carried me into his house, which happened to be close by. He looked after me very well, I assure you."

Davilof released her hand abruptly. His face darkened.

"And this man? Who was he?" he demanded jealously. "I hate to think of any man—a stranger—touching you."

"Nonsense! Would you have preferred me to remain lying in the middle of the road?"

"You know I would not. But I'd rather some woman had looked after you. Do you know who the man was?"

"I did not—at first."

"But you do now?" quickly. "Who was it?"

"No one you know, I think," she answered provokingly.

His eyes flashed.

"Why are you making a mystery about it?" he asked suspiciously. "You're keeping something from me! Who was this man? Tell me his name!"

Magda froze.

"My dear Antoine! Why this air of high tragedy?" she said lightly. "And what on earth has it to do with you who the man was?"

"You know what it has to do with me!"

"With my accompanist?" she asked, raising her brows delicately.

"No!" he answered, with sudden violence. "With the man who loves you! I'm that—and you know it, Magda! Could I play for you as I do if I did not understand your every mood and emotion? You know I couldn't! And then you ask what it matters to me when some unknown man has held you in his arms, carried you into his house—kissed you, perhaps, while you were unconscious!" His imagination ran suddenly riot.

"Stop! You're going too far!" Magda checked him sharply. "You're always telling me you love me. I don't want to hear it." She paused, then added cruelly: "I want you for playing my accompaniments, Davilof. That's all. Do you understand?"

His eyes blazed. With a quick movement he stepped in front of her.

"I'm a man—as well as an accompanist," he said hoarsely. "One day you'll have to reckon with the man, Magda!"

There was a new, unaccustomed quality in his voice. Hitherto she had not taken his ardor very seriously. He was a Pole and a musician, with all the temperament that might be expected from such a combination, and she had let it go at that, pushing his love aside with the careless hand of a woman to whom the incense of men's devotion has been so freely offered as to have become a commonplace. But now the new ring of determination, of something unexpectedly dogged in his voice, poignantly recalled the warning uttered by Lady Arabella earlier in the day.

Magda's nerve wavered. A momentary panic assailed her. Then she intuitively struck the right note.

"Ah, Davilof, don't worry me now—not to-night!" she said appealingly. "I'm tired. It's been a bit of a strain—the accident and—and——"

"Forgive me!" In a moment he was

all penitence, overwhelmed with compunction. "Forget it! I've behaved like a brute. I ought to have seen that you were worn out."

He was beside himself with remorse.

"It's all right, Antoine." She smiled forgiveness at him. "Only I felt—I felt I couldn't stand anything more to-night. I suppose it's taken it out of me more than I knew—the shock, and fainting like that."

"Of course it has. You ought to rest. I wish," he added distractedly, "Mrs. Grey were in."

"Is she not?"

"No. The maid told me she was out when I came, and she hasn't returned yet."

"She's been held up by the fog, I expect," answered Magda. "Never mind. I'll sit here in this big chair and you shall switch off these glaring lights and play to me, Antoine. That will rest me better than anything."

She was a little sorry for the man, trying to make up to him for the pain she knew she had inflicted a moment before, and there was a dangerous sweetness in her voice.

Davilof's eyes kindled. He stooped swiftly and kissed her hand.

"You are too good to me!" he said huskily.

Then, while she lay back restfully in a chair which he heaped with cushions for her, he played to her, improvising as he played—slow, dreaming melodies which soothed and lulled, but held always an undertone of passionate appeal. The man himself spoke in his music; his love pleaded with her in its soft, beseeching cadences.

But Magda failed to hear it. Her thoughts were elsewhere, back with the man who, that afternoon, had first rescued her and afterward treated her with a blunt candor which had been little less than brutal. She felt sore and resentful, smarting under the keen dismayed sense of surprise and injustice as a child

may feel who receives a blow instead of an anticipated caress.

Indulged and flattered by every one with whom she came in contact, it had been like a slap in the face to find some one—more particularly some one of the masculine persuasion—who, far from bestowing the admiration and homage she had learned to look for as a right, quite openly regarded her with contemptuous disapproval and made no bones about telling her so.

His indictment of her had left nothing to the imagination. She felt stunned, and for the first time in her life, a little unwilling doubt of herself assaulted her. Was she really anything at all like the woman Michael Quarrington had pictured? A woman without heart or conscience—the “kind of woman he had no place for?”

She winced a little at the thought. It was strange how much she minded his opinion—the opinion of a man whom she had only met by chance and whom she was very unlikely ever to meet again. He himself had certainly evinced no anxiety to renew the acquaintance. And this, too, fretted her in some unaccountable way.

She could not analyze her own emotions. She felt hurt and angry and ashamed in the same breath, and all because an unknown man, an absolute stranger, had told her in no measured terms exactly what he thought of her!

Only—he was not really quite a stranger! He was the “Saint Michael” of her childhood’s days, the man with whom she had unconsciously compared those other men whom the passing years had brought into her life—and always to their disadvantage.

That first time she had seen him in the woods at Coverdale was the day when Hugh Vallincourt had beaten her; she had been smarting with the physical pain and humiliation of it. And now, this second time they had met, she had been once more forced to endure that

strange and unaccustomed experience called pain. Only this time she felt as if her soul had been beaten, and it was Saint Michael himself who had scourged her.

The door at the far end of the room opened suddenly and a welcome voice broke cheerfully across the bitter current of her thoughts.

“Well, here I am at last! Has Magda arrived home yet?”

Davilof ceased playing abruptly and the speaker paused on the threshold of the room, peering into the dusk. Magda rose from her seat by the fire and switched on one of the electric burners.

“Yes, here I am,” she said. “Did you get held up by the fog, Gillian?”

The newcomer advanced into the circle of light. She was a small, slight woman, though the furs she was wearing served to conceal the slenderness of her figure. Some one had once said of her that “Mrs. Gray was a charming study in sepia.” The description was not inapt. Eyes and hair were brown as a beechnut, and a scattering of golden-brown freckles emphasized the warm tints of a skin as soft as velvet.

“Did I get held up?” she repeated. “My dear, I walked miles—miles, I tell you!—in that hideous fog. And then found I’d been walking entirely in the wrong direction! I fetched up somewhere down Notting Hill Gate way, and at last by the help of Heaven and a policeman discovered the tube station. So here I am. But if I could have come across a taxi I’d have been ready to buy it, I was so tired!”

“Poor dear!” Magda was duly sympathetic. “We’ll have some tea. You’ll stay, Davilof?”

“I think not, thanks. I’m dining out,” he said, with a glance at his watch. “And I shan’t have too much time to get home and change, as it is.”

Magda held out her hand.



He played to her, improvising as he played—slow, dreaming melodies which soothed and lulled, but held always an undertone of passionate appeal.

"Good-by, then. Thank you for keeping me company till Gillian came."

There was a subtle sweetness of gratitude in the glance she threw at him which fired his blood. He caught her hand and carried it to his lips.

"The thanks are mine," he said in a stifled voice. And swinging round on his heel he left the room abruptly, quite omitting to make his farewells to Mrs. Grey.

The latter looked across at Magda with a gleam of mirth in her brown eyes. Then she shook her head reprovingly.

"Will you never learn wisdom, Magda?" she asked, subsiding into a chair and extending a pair of neatly shod feet to the fire's warmth.

Magda laughed a little.

"Well, it won't be the fault of my friends if I don't!" she returned ruefully. "Marraine expended a heap of eloquence over my misdeeds this afternoon."

"Lady Arabella? I'm glad to hear it. Though she has about as much chance of producing any permanent result as the gentleman who occupied his leisure time in rolling a stone uphill."

"Cat!" Magda made a small grimace at her. "Ah, here's some tea!" Melrose, known among Magda's friends as "the perfect butler," had come noiselessly into the room and was arranging the tea paraphernalia with the reverential precision of one making preparation

for some mystic rite. "Perhaps when you've had a cup you'll feel more amiable. That is, if I give you lots of sugar."

"What was the text of Lady Arabella's homily?" inquired Gillian presently, as she sipped her tea.

"Oh, that boy, Kit Raynham," replied Magda impatiently. "It appears I'm blighting his young prospects—his professional ones, I mean. Though I don't quite see why an attack of calf love for me should upset his work as an architect!"

"I do—if he spends his time sketching 'the Wielitzska' in half a dozen different poses instead of making plans for a garden city."

Magda smiled involuntarily.

"Does he do that?" she said. "But how ridiculous of him!"

"It's merely indicative of his state of mind," returned Gillian. She gazed meditatively into the fire. "You know, Magda, I think it will mean the end of our friendship when Coppertop reaches years of discretion."

Coppertop was Gillian's small son, a young person of seven, who owed his cognomen to the crop of flaming red curls which adorned his round button of a head.

Magda laughed.

"Pouf! By the time that happens I shall be quite old—and harmless."

Gillian shook her head.

"Your type is never harmless, my dear. Unless you fall in love, you'll be an unexploded mine till the day of your death."

"That nearly occurred to-day, by the way," vouchsafed Magda tranquilly. "In which case"—smiling—"you'd have been spared any further anxiety on Coppertop's account."

"What do you mean?" demanded Gillian, startled.

"I mean that I've had an adventure this afternoon. We got smashed up in the fog."

"Oh, my dear! How dreadful! How did it happen?"

"Something collided with the car and shot us bang into a motor bus, and then, almost at the same moment, something else charged into us from behind. So there was a pretty fair mix-up."

"Why didn't you tell me before? Was any one badly hurt? And how did you get home?" Gillian's questions poured out excitedly.

"No, no one was badly hurt. I got a blow on the head, and fainted. So a man who'd been inside the bus we ran into performed the rescuing stunt. His house was close by, and he carried me in there and proceeded to dose me with sal volatile first and tea afterward. He wound up by presenting me with an unvarnished summary of his opinion of the likes of me."

There was an unwontedly hard note in Magda's voice as she detailed the afternoon's events, and Gillian glanced at her sharply.

"I don't understand. Was he a strait-laced prig who disapproved of dancing, do you mean?"

"Nothing of the sort. He had a most comprehensive appreciation of the art of dancing. His disapproval was entirely concentrated on me—personally."

"But how could it be—since he didn't know you?"

Magda gave a little grin.

"You mean that it would have been quite comprehensible if he *had* known me?" she observed ironically.

The other laughed.

"Don't be so provoking! You know perfectly well what I meant! You deserve that I should answer 'yes' to that question."

"Do, if you like."

"I would, only I happen to know you a great deal better than you know yourself."

"What do you know about me, then, that I don't?"

Gillian's nice brown eyes smiled across at her.

"I know that, somewhere inside you, you've got the capacity for being as sweet and kind and tender and self-sacrificing as any woman living, if only something would happen to make it worth while. I wish," she added fervently, "I wish to Heaven you'd fall in love!"

"I'm not likely to," said Magda shortly. "I'm in love with my art. It gives you a better return than love for any man."

"No," answered Gillian quietly. "No. You're wrong. Tony died when we'd only been married a year. But that year was worth the whole of the rest of life put together. And," very softly, "I've got Coppertop."

Magda leaned forward suddenly and kissed her.

"Dear Gillyflower!" she said. "I'm so glad you feel like that, bless you! I wish I could! But I never shall. I was soured in the making, I think." Magda laughed rather forlornly. "I don't trust love. It's the thing that hurts and tortures and breaks a woman—as my mother was hurt and tortured and broken." She paused. "No, preserve me from falling in love!" she added more lightly. "A loaf of bread, and thou beside me in the wilderness, doesn't appeal to me in the least."

"It will one day," retorted Gillian oracularly. "In the meantime you might go on telling me about the man who fished you out of the smash. Was he young? And good looking? Perhaps he is destined to be your fate," she added teasingly.

"He was rather over thirty, I should think. And good looking—quite. But he 'hates my type of woman,' you'll be interested to know. So that you can put your high hopes back on the top shelf again."

"Not at all," declared Gillian briskly.

"There's nothing like beginning with a little aversion."

Magda smiled reminiscently.

"If you'd been present at our interview, you'd realize that 'a little aversion' is a cloying euphemism for the feeling exhibited by my late preserver."

"What was he like, then?"

"At first, because I wouldn't take the sal volatile—you know how I detest the stuff!—and sit still where he'd put me like a good little girl, he ordered me about as if I were a child of six. He absolutely bullied me! Then it apparently occurred to him to take my moral welfare in hand, and I should judge he considers that Jezebel and Delilah were positively provincial in their methods as compared with me."

"Nonsense! If he didn't know you, why should he suppose himself competent to form any opinion about you at all—good, bad, or indifferent?"

"I don't know," replied Magda slowly. Then, speaking with sudden defiance, "Yes, I do know! A pal of his had—had cared about me some time or other, and I'd turned him down. That's why."

"Oh, Magda!" There was both reproach and understanding in Gillian's voice.

Magda shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, if he wanted to pay off old scores on his pal's behalf, he succeeded," she said mirthlessly.

Gillian looked at her in surprise. She had never seen Magda quite like this before. Her somber eyes held a curious strained look like those of some wild thing of the forest caught in a trap and in pain.

"And you don't know who he was—I mean the man who came to your help and then lectured you?"

"Yes, I do. It was Michael Quarrington, the artist."

"Michael Quarrington? Why, he has the reputation of being a most charming man!"

Magda stared into the fire.

"I dare say he might have—a good deal of charm," she said slowly, "if he cared to exert it. Apparently, however, he didn't think I was worth the effort."

CHAPTER VIII.

Shouts of mirth came jubilantly from the mirror room as Davilof made his way thither one afternoon a few days later. The shrill peal of a child's laughter rose gayly above the lower note of women's voices, and when the accompanist opened the door it was to discover Magda completely engrossed in giving Coppertop a first dancing lesson, while Gillian sat stitching busily away at some small nether garments afflicted with rents and tears in sundry places. Every now and again she glanced up with softly amused eyes to watch her son's somewhat unsteady efforts in the Terpsichorean art.

Coppertop, a slim young reed in his bright-green knitted jersey, was clinging with one hand to a wooden bar attached to the wall, which served Magda for the "bar practice" which constitutes a part of every dancer's daily work, while Magda, holding his other hand in hers, essayed to instruct him in the principle of "turning out," that flexible turning of the knees toward the side which gives so much facility of movement.

"Point your toes sideways—so," directed Magda. "This one toward me—like that." She stooped and placed his foot in position. "Now, kick out! Try to kick me!"

Coppertop tried and succeeded, greeting his accomplishment with shrieks of delight.

It was just at this moment that Davilof appeared on the scene, pausing abruptly in the doorway as he caught sight of Magda's laughing face bent above the fiery red head. There was something very charming in her expression of eager, light-hearted abandonment to the fun of the moment.

At the sound of the opening door Coppertop wriggled out of her grasp like an eel, twisting his lithe young body round to see who the new arrival might be. His face fell woefully as he caught sight of Davilof.

"Oh, you can't *never* have come a'ready to play for the Fairy Lady!" he exclaimed in accents of dire disappointment.

"Fairy Lady" was the name he had bestowed upon Magda when, very early in their acquaintance, she had performed for his sole and particular benefit a maturer edition of the dance she had evolved as a child—the dance with which she had so much astonished Lady Arabella. Nowadays it figured prominently on her program as "The Hamadryad," and was enormously popular.

"It's not never three o'clock!" wailed Coppertop disconsolately, as Davilof dangled his watch in front of him.

"I think it is, small son," interpolated Gillian, gathering together her sewing materials. "Come along. We must leave the Fairy Lady to practice now, because she's got to dance to half the people in London to-morrow."

"Must I really go?" appealed Coppertop, beseeching Magda with a pair of melting green eyes.

She dropped a light kiss on the top of his red curls.

"Fraid so, Coppertop," she said. "You wouldn't want Fairy Lady to dance badly and tumble down, would you?"

But Coppertop was not to be taken in so easily.

"Huh!" he scoffed. "You *couldn't* tumble down—not never!"

"Still, you mustn't be greedy, Topkins," urged Magda persuasively. "Remember all the grown-up people who want me to dance to them! I can't keep it all for one little boy."

He stared at her for a moment in silence. Suddenly he flung his arms

round her slender hips, clutching her tightly, and hid his face against her skirt.

"Oh, Fairy Lady, you are so booful—so booful!" he whispered in a smothered voice. Then, with a big sigh: "But one little boy won't be greedy." He turned to his mother. "Come along, mummie!" he commanded superbly. And he trotted out of the room beside her with his small head well up.

Left alone, Davilof and Magda smiled across at one another.

"Funny little person, isn't he?" she said.

The musician nodded.

"Grown-ups might possibly envy the freedom of speech permitted to childhood," he said quietly. Then, still more quietly: "'Fairy Lady, you are so beautiful!'"

"But you're not a child, so don't poach Coppertop's preserves!" retorted Magda swiftly. "Let's get to work, Antoine. I'll just change into my practice kit and then I want to run through the Swan Maiden's dance. You fix the lighting."

She vanished into an adjoining room, while Davilof proceeded to switch off most of the burners, leaving only those which illumined the space in front of the big mirror. The remainder of the big room receded into a gray twilight encircling the patch of luminance.

Presently Magda reappeared wearing a loose tunic of some white, silken material, girdled at the waist, but yet leaving her with perfect freedom of limb.

Davilof watched her as she came down the long room with the feather-light, floating walk of the trained dancer, and something leaped into his eyes which was very different from mere admiration—something that, taken in conjunction with Lady Arabella's caustic comments of a few days ago, might have warned Magda had she seen it.

But with her thoughts preoccupied

by the work in hand she failed to notice it, and, advancing till she faced the great mirror, she executed a few steps in front of it, humming the motif of the "Swan Maiden" music under her breath.

"Play, Antoine," she threw at him over her shoulder.

Davilof hesitated, made a movement toward her, then wheeled round abruptly and went to the piano. A moment later the exquisite, smoothly rippling music which he had himself written for the Swan Maiden dance purled out into the room.

The story of the Swan Maiden had been taken from an old legend which told of a beautiful maiden and the youth who loved her.

According to the narrative, the pair were unfortunate enough to incur the displeasure of the evil fairy Ritmagar, and the latter, in order to punish them, transformed the maiden into a white swan, thus separating the hapless lovers forever. Afterward, the disconsolate youth, bemoaning the cruelty of fate, used to wander daily along the shores of the lake where the maiden he loved was compelled to dwell in her guise of a swan, and eventually Ritmagar, apparently touched to a limited compassion, permitted the Swan Maiden to resume her human form once a day during the hour immediately preceding sunset. But the condition was attached that she must always return to the lake before the sun sank below the horizon, when she would be compelled to resume her shape of a swan. Should she fail to return by the appointed time, death would be the inevitable consequence.

Every reader of fairy tales, and certainly any one who knows anything at all about being in love, can guess the sequel. Comes a day when the lovers, absorbed in their love-making, forget the flight of time, so that the unhappy maiden returns to the shore of the lake

to find that the sun has already dipped below the horizon. She falls on her knees, beseeching the witch Ritmagar for mercy, but no answer is vouchsafed, and gradually the Swan Maiden finds herself growing weaker and weaker until at last death claims her.

A dance, based upon this legend, had been devised for Magda in conjunction with Vladimir Ravinski, the brilliant Russian dancer, he taking the lover's part; and the whole tragic little drama was designed to terminate with a solo dance by Magda as the dying Swan Maiden. Davilof had written the music for it, and the dance was to be performed at the Imperial Theater for the first time the following week.

Davilof played ever more and more softly as the dance drew to its close. The note of lament sounded with increasing insistence through the slowing ripple of the accompaniment, and at last, as Magda sank to the ground in a piteous attitude which somehow suggested both the drooping grace of a dying swan and the innocence and helplessness of the hapless maiden, the music died away into silence.

There was a little pause. Then Davilof sprang to his feet.

"By God, Magda! You're magnificent!" he exclaimed, with the spontaneous appreciation of one genuine artist for another.

Magda raised her head and looked up at him with vague, startled eyes. She still preserved the pose on which the dance had ceased, and had hardly yet returned to the world of reality from that magic world into which her art had transported her.

The burning enthusiasm in Davilof's excited tones recalled her abruptly.

"Was it good—was it really good?" she asked a little shakily.

"Good?" he said. "It was superb!"

He held out his hands and she laid hers in them without thinking, allow-

ing him to draw her to her feet beside him.

She stood quite still, breathing rather quickly from her recent exertions and supported by the close clasp of his hands on hers. Her lips were a little parted, her slight breast rose and fell unevenly, and a faint rose color glowed beneath the ivory pallor of her skin.

Suddenly Davilof's grip tightened.

"You beautiful thing!" he exclaimed huskily. "Magda!"

The next moment, with a swift, un-governed movement he caught her to him and was crushing her in his arms.

"Antoine! Let me go!"

But the pressure of her soft, pulsing body against his own sent the blood racing through his veins. He smothered the words with his mouth on hers, kissing her breathless with a headlong passion which defied restraint, slaking his longing for her as a man denied water may at last slake his thirst at some suddenly discovered pool.

Magda felt herself powerless as a leaf caught up in a whirlwind. Swept suddenly into the hot vehemence of a man's desire while she was yet unstrung and quivering from the emotional strain of the Swan Maiden's dance, every nerve of her quickened to a tingling sentience by the underlying passion of the music.

With an effort she wrenched herself out of his arms and ran from him blindly into the farthest corner of the room. She had no clear idea of making for the door, but only of getting away, anywhere, heedless of direction.

An instant later she was standing with her back to the wall, leaning helplessly against the ancient tapestry which clothed it. In that dim corner of the vast room her slim figure showed faintly limned against its blurred greens and grays like that of some pallid statue.

"Go! Go away!" she gasped.

Davilof laughed triumphantly. Nothing could hold him now. The bar-

riers of use and habit were down irrevocably.

"Go away?" he said. "No, I'm not going away."

He strode straight across the space which intervened between them. She watched his coming with dilated eyes. Her hands, palms downward, were pressed hard against the woven surface of the tapestry on either side of her.

As he approached she shrank back, her whole body taut and straining against the wall. Then she bent her head and flung up her arms, curving them to shield her face. Davilof could just see the rounded whiteness of them, glimmering like pale pearl next the satin sheen of night-black hair.

With a stifled cry he sprang forward and gripped them in his strong, supple hands, drawing them down inexorably.

"Kiss me!" he demanded fiercely. "Magda, kiss me!"

She shook her head, struggling for speech.

"No!" she gasped. "No!"

She glanced desperately round, but he had her hemmed in, prisoned against the wall.

"Kiss me!" he repeated unsteadily. "You—you'd better, Magda."

"And if I don't?" She forced the words through her stiff lips.

"But you will!" he said hoarsely. "You will!"

There was a dangerous note in his voice. The man had got beyond the stage to be played with. In the silence of the room Magda could hear his labored breathing, feel his heart leaping against her own soft breast crushed against his. It frightened her.

"You'll let me go if I do?" The words seemed to run into each other in her helpless haste.

"I'll let you go."

"Very well."

Slowly, reluctantly she lifted her face to his and kissed him. But the touch

of her lips on his scattered the last vestige of his self-control.

"My beloved! Beloved!"

He seized her roughly in his arms. She felt his kisses overwhelming her, burning against her closed eyelids, bruising her soft mouth and throat.

"I love you—worship you!"

"Let me go!" she cried shrilly, struggling against him. "Let me go—you promised it!"

He released her, drawing slowly back, his arms falling unwillingly away from her.

"Oh, yes," he muttered confusedly.

"I did promise."

The instant she felt his grip relax, Magda sprang forward and switched on the center burners, flooding the room with a blaze of light, and in the sudden glare she and Davilof stood staring silently at each other.

With the springing up of the lights it was as if a spell had broken. The strained, hunted expression left Magda's face. She wasn't frightened any longer. Davilof was no more the man whose sudden passion had surged about her, threatening to break down all defenses and overwhelm her. He was just Davilof, her accompanist, who, like half the men of her acquaintance, was more or less in love with her and who had overstepped the boundary which she had very definitely marked out between herself and him.

She regarded him stormily.

"Have you gone mad?" she asked contemptuously.

He returned her look, his eyes curiously brilliant. Then he laughed suddenly.

"Mad?" he said. "Yes, I think I am mad. Mad with love for you! Magda"—he came and stood close beside her—"don't send me away! Don't say you can't care for me. You don't love me now, but I could teach you." His voice deepened. "I love you so much! Oh, sweetest! Soul of me! Love is so



"Go! Go away!" she gasped.

beautiful! Let me teach you how beautiful it is!"

Magda drew back.

"No," she said. The brief negative fell clear and distinct as a bell.

"I won't take no," he returned hotly. "I won't take no. I want you! Good God! Don't you understand? My love for you isn't just a boy's infatuation which you can dismiss with a word. It's all of me! I worship you! Haven't I been with you day after day, worked

with you, followed your every mood, shared your very soul with you? You're mine! Mine, because I understand you. You've shown me all you thought, all you felt. You couldn't have done that if I hadn't meant something to you."

"Certainly you meant something to me. You meant," she said very clearly, "an almost perfect accompanist. Why should you have imagined you meant more? I gave you no reason to think so."

"No reason?"

It was as if the two short words were the key which unlocked the floodgates of some raging torrent. Magda could never afterward recall the words he used. She only knew they beat upon her with the cruel, lancing sharpness of hail driven by the wind.

She had treated him much as other men, evoking the love of his ardent temperament by that subtle witchery which was second nature to her and which can be such a potent weapon in the hands of a woman whose own emotions remain untouched. And now the thwarted passion of the lover and the savage anger of a man who felt himself deceived and duped, broke over her in a resistless storm, an outburst so bitter and so trenchant that for the moment she remained speechless before it, buffeted into helpless, resentful silence. When he ceased, he had stripped her of every rag of feminine defense.

"Have you finished?" she asked in a stifled voice.

She made no attempt to palliate matters or to refute anything he had said. In his present frame of mind it would have been useless pointing out to him that she had treated him no differently from other men. He was a Pole, and he had caught fire where others would merely have glowed smolderingly.

"Yes," he rejoined sullenly. "I've finished."

"So much the better."

He regarded her speculatively.

"What are you made of, I wonder? Does it mean nothing to you that a man has given you of his very best—all that he has?"

She appeared to reflect a moment.

"I'm afraid it doesn't. There's only one thing really means much to me, and that is my art. And Lady Arabella," she added after a pause. "She's always meant a good deal."

She sat down by the fire and held out her hands to its warmth. The slender fingers seemed almost transparent, glowing rosily in the firelight. Davilof turned to go.

"Good-by, then," he said curtly.

"Good-by." Magda nodded indifferently. Then, carelessly: "I shall want you to-morrow, Davilof—same time."

He swung round violently.

"I will never play for you again! Did you imagine I should?"

She smiled at him—that slow, subtle smile of hers with its hint of mockery.

"You won't be able to keep away," she replied.

"I will never play for you again!" he repeated. "Never! I will teach myself to hate you."

She shook her head lightly.

"Impossible, Davilof."

"It's not impossible. There's very little difference between love and hate sometimes. And I want all or nothing."

"I'm afraid it must be nothing, then."

"We shall see. But if I can't have you, I swear no other man shall!"

She glanced up at him, lifting her brows a little.

"Aren't you going too far, Antoine? You can hate me, if you like. Or love me. It's a matter of indifference to me which you do. But I don't propose to allow you to arrange my life for me. And in any case," she added after

a moment, "I'm not likely to fall in love with you or any one else."

"You think not?" He stood looking down at her somberly. "You'll fall in love right enough some day. And when you do it will be all or nothing with you, too. You're that kind. Love will take you—and break you, Magda."

He spoke slowly, with an odd kind of tensiety. To Magda it seemed almost as if his quiet speech held the gravity of prophecy, and she shivered a little.

"And when that time comes, then you'll come back to me," he added.

Magda threw up her head, defying him.

"You propose to be waiting round to pick up the pieces, then?" she suggested nonchalantly.

But only the sound of the closing door answered her. Davilof had gone.

CHAPTER IX.

Lady Arabella was in her element. She had two brilliant and unattached young men dining with her—one, Michael Quarrington, a lion in the artistic world, and the other, Antoine Davilof, who showed unmistakable symptoms of developing sooner or later into a lion in the musical world.

It was Davilof who was responsible for the artist's presence at Lady Arabella's dinner table. She had expressed in her usual autocratic manner a wish that he should be presented to her, and had determined upon the evening of the first performance of "The Swan Maiden" as the appointed time.

Davilof appeared doubtful and declared that Quarrington was leaving England, and had already fixed the date of his departure.

"He's crossing from Dover the very day before the one you want him to dine with you," he told her.

But Lady Arabella swept his objections aside with regal indifference.

"Crossing, is he?" she snapped.

"Well, tell him I want him to dine here and go on to the show with us afterward. He'll cross the day after, you'll find—if he crosses at all!" she wound up enigmatically.

So it came about that her two lions, the last-arrived artist and the soon-to-arrive musician, were both dining with her on the appointed evening.

Lady Arabella adored lions. Also, notwithstanding her seventy years, she retained as much original Eve in her composition as a girl of seventeen, and she adored young men.

In particular, she decided that she approved of Michael Quarrington. She liked his clean English build. She liked his lean, square jaw, and the fair hair with the unruly kink in it which reminded her of a certain other young man, who had been young when she was young, and to whom she had bade farewell at her parents' inflexible decree more than fifty years ago. Above all, she liked the artist's eyes—those gray, steady eyes with their look of reticence so characteristic of the man himself.

Reticence was an asset in her ladyship's estimation. It showed good sense, and it offered provocative opportunities for a battle of wits such as her soul loved.

"Have you ever seen my goddaughter dance, Mr. Quarrington?" she asked him.

"Yes, several times."

His tone was noncommittal and she eyed him sharply.

"Don't admire dancing, do you?" she threw at him.

Quarrington regarded her with a humorous twinkle.

"And I an artist! How can you ask, Lady Arabella?"

"Well, you sounded supremely detached," she grumbled.

"I think Mademoiselle Wielitzka's dancing is the loveliest thing I have ever seen," he returned simply.

The old woman vouchsafed him a smile.

"Thank you," she answered. "I enjoyed that quite as much as I used to enjoy being told I'd a pretty dimple when I was a girl."

"You have now," rejoined Quarrington audaciously.

Lady Arabella's eyes sparkled. She loved a neatly turned compliment.

"Thank you again. But it's a pity to waste your pretty speeches on an old woman of seventy."

"I don't," retorted the artist gravely. "I reserve them for the young people I know of that age."

She laughed delightedly. Then, turning to Davilof, she drew him into the conversation and the talk became general.

Later, as they were all three standing in the hall preparatory to departure, she flashed another of her sudden remarks at Quarrington.

"I understand you came to my goddaughter's rescue in that bad fog last week?"

The quiet, gray eyes revealed nothing.

"I was privileged to be some little use," he replied lightly.

"I hardly gathered you regarded it as a privilege," observed her ladyship dryly.

The shaft went home. A fleeting light gleamed for a moment in the gray eyes. Davilof was standing a few paces away, being helped into his coat by a manservant, and Quarrington spoke low and quickly.

"She told you?" he said. There was astonishment, resentment, almost, in his voice.

"No, no." Lady Arabella, smiling to herself, reassured him hastily. "It was a shot in the dark on my part. Magda never confides details. She hands you out an unadorned slice of fact and leaves you to interpret it as you choose. But if you know her rather well, as I

do, and can add two and two together and make five or any unlikely number of them, why, then you can fill in some of the blanks for yourself."

She glanced at him with impish amusement as she moved toward the door.

"Come along, Davilof," she said. "I suppose you want to hear your own music—even if Magda's dancing no longer interests you?"

Davilof gave her his arm down the steps.

"What do you mean, milady?" he asked. "There is no more beautiful dancing in the world."

"Then why have you jacked up your job of accompanist? Shoes beginning to pinch a little, eh?" she asked shrewdly.

"You mean I grow too big for my boots? No, madame. If I were the greatest musician in Europe instead of being merely Antoine Davilof, it could only be a source of pride to me to be asked to accompany the Wielitzka."

Lady Arabella paused on the pavement, her foot on the step of the limousine.

"Then how is it Mrs. Grey accompanies her now? She was playing for her at the Duchess of Lichbrooke's the other evening."

"Magda didn't tell you, then?"

"No, she didn't. Or I'd not be wasting my breath in asking you. I asked her, and she said you had taken to playing wrong notes."

A faint smile curved the lips above the small golden beard.

"Then it must be true. Undoubtedly I played wrong notes, milady."

"Very careless of you, I'm sure." Under the garish light of a neighboring street lamp her keen old eyes met his significantly. "Or—very imprudent, Davilof. You need the tact of the whole diplomatic service to deal with Magda. And you ought to know it."

"True, milady. But I was not de-

signed for diplomacy, and a man can only use the weapons Heaven has given him."

"I wouldn't have suggested Heaven as invariably the source of your inspirations," retorted Lady Arabella, and hopped into the car.

They arrived at the Imperial Theater to find Mrs. Grey already seated in Lady Arabella's box. Some one else was there, too—old Virginie, with her withered-apple cheeks and bright-brown, birdlike eyes, still active and erect and very little altered from the Virginie of ten years before. Just as she had devoted herself to Diane, so now she devoted herself to Diane's daughter, and no first performance of a new dance of the Wielitzka's took place without Virginie's presence somewhere in the house. To-night, Lady Arabella had invited her into her box and Virginie was a quivering bundle of excitement. She rose from her seat at the back of the box as the newcomers entered.

"Sit down, Virginie." Lady Arabella nodded kindly to the Frenchwoman. "And pull your chair forward. You'll see nothing back there, and there is plenty of room for us all."

"*Merci, madame. Madame est bien gentille.*" Virginie's voice was fervent with ecstatic gratitude as she resumed her seat and waited expectantly for Magda's appearance.

Other dances, performed principally by lesser lights of the company and affording only a briefly tantalizing glimpse of Magda herself, preceded the chief event of the evening. But at last the next item on the program read as:

"The Swan Maiden." Adapted from an old legend.

And a tremor of excitement, a sudden hush of eager anticipation, rippled through the audience like wind over grass.

Slowly the heavy silken curtains drew to either side of the stage, revealing a sunlit glade. In the background glim-

mered the still waters of a lake, while at the foot of a tree, in an attitude of tranquil repose, lay the Swan Maiden—Magda. One white, naked arm was curved behind her head, pillowing it; the other lay lightly across her body, palm upward, with the rosy-tipped fingers curled inward a little, like a sleeping child's. She looked infinitely young as she lay there, her slender, pliant limbs relaxed in untroubled slumber.

Lady Arabella, with Quarrington sitting next her in the box, heard the quick intake of his breath as he leaned suddenly forward.

"Yes, it has quite a familiar look," she observed. "Reminds me of your 'Repose of Titania.'"

His eyes flickered inquiringly over her face, but it was evident that hers had been merely a chance remark. The old lady had obviously no idea as to who it was who had posed for the Titania of the picture. That was one of the "slices of fact" which Magda had omitted to hand out when recounting her adventure in the fog to her god-mother.

Quarrington leaned back in his chair satisfied.

"It's not unlike," he agreed carelessly.

Then the entrance of Vladimir Ravinski, the lovelorn youth of the legend, riveted his attention on the stage.

The dance which followed was exquisite. The Russian was a beautiful youth, like a young sun-god with his flying yellow locks and glorious symmetry of body, and the *pas de deux* between him and Magda was a thing to marvel at, sweeping through the whole gamut of love's emotion from the first shy, delicate hesitancy of worshipping boy and girl to the rapturous abandon of mated lovers.

Then across the vibrant, pulsating scene fell the deadly shadow of the witch Ritmagar. The stage darkened, the violins in the orchestra skirted

eerily in chromatic showers of notes, and the hunched figure of Ritmagar approaching menaced the lovers. A wild dance followed, the lovers now kneeling and beseeching the evil fairy to have pity on them, now rushing despairingly into each other's arms, while the witch's own dancing held all of threat and malevolence that superb artistry could infuse into it.

The tale unfolded itself with the inevitableness of preordained catastrophe.

Ritmagar declines to be appeased. She raises her clawlike hand, pointing a crooked finger at the lovers, and with a clash of brazen sound and the dull thrumming of drums the whole scene dissolves into absolute darkness. When the darkness lifts once more, the stage is empty save for a pure white swan which sails slowly down the lake and disappears.

Followed a solo dance by Ravinski in which he gave full vent to the anguish of the bereft lover, while now and again the swan swam stately by him. At length the witch appeared once more and, yielding to his impassioned entreaties, declared that the Swan Maiden might reassume her human form during the hour preceding sunset, and Magda, the Swan Maiden released from enchantment for the time being, came running on to the stage.

The love duet was resumed, and presently, when the lovers had made their exit, Ritmagar was seen gleefully watching while the red sun dropped slowly down the sky, sinking at last below the rim of the lake.

Then a low rumble of drums muttered as she stole from the stage, the personification of vindictive triumph, and all at once the great concourse of people in the auditorium seemed to strain forward, conscious that the climax of the evening, the wonderful solo dance by the Wielitzska, was about to begin.

The moon rose on the left, and Magda, a slim, white figure in her dress,

which cleverly suggested the plumage of a swan, floated on to the stage with that exquisite, ethereal lightness of movement which only toe-dancing—and toe-dancing of the most perfectly finished quality—seems able to convey. It was as if her feet were not touching the solid earth at all. The feather-light drifting of blown petals, the swaying grace of a swan as it glides along the surface of the water; the quivering, spiritlike flight of a butterfly—it seemed as if all these had been caught and blended together by the dancer.

The heavier instruments of the orchestra were silenced, but the rippling music of the strings wove and interwove a dreaming melody, unutterably sweet and appealing, as the Swan Maiden, bathed in pallid moonlight, besought the invisible Ritmagar for mercy, praying that she might not die even though the sun had set.

But there comes no answer to her prayers. A somber note of stern denial sounds in the music, and the Swan Maiden yields to utter despair, drooping slowly to earth. Just as Death himself claims her, her lover, demented with anguish, comes rushing to her side. and, turning toward him as she lies dying upon the ground, she yields herself to his embrace with a last gesture of passionate surrender.

Slowly the heavy curtains swung together, hiding the limp, lifeless body of the Swan Maiden and the despairing figure of her lover as he knelt beside her, and, after a breathless pause, the great audience, carried away by the tragic drama of the dance, its passion and its pathos, broke into a thunder of applause which rolled and reverberated through the theater.

Again and again Magda and her partner were called before the curtain, the former laden with the sheafs of flowers which had been handed up on to the stage. But the audience refused to be satisfied until at last Magda appeared

alone, standing very white and slender under the blaze of lights, a faint suggestion of fatigue in the poise of her listless figure.

Instantly the applause broke out anew, thunderous, overwhelming. Magda smiled, then held out her arms in a little disarming gesture of appeal, touching in its absolute simplicity. It was as if she said: "Dear people, I love you all for being so pleased, but I'm very, very tired. Please, won't you let me go?"

So they let her go, with one final round of cheers and clapping, and then, as the curtains fell together once more and the orchestra slid unobtrusively into the entr'acte music, a buzz of conversation arose.

Michael Quarrington turned and spoke to Davilof as they stood together.

"This will be my last memory of England for some time to come. Mademoiselle Wielitzka is very wonderful. As much actress as dancer—and both rather superlatively."

There was an odd note in Quarrington's voice, as if he were forcibly repressing some less measured form of words.

Davilof glanced at him sharply.

"You think so?" he said curtly.

The musician's hazel eyes were burning feverishly. One hand was clenched on the back of the chair from which he had just risen; the other hung at his side, the fingers opening and shutting nervously.

Quarrington smiled.

"Don't you?"

The eyes of the two men met, and Michael became suddenly conscious that the other was struggling in the grip of some strong emotion. He could even sense its atmosphere of antagonism toward himself.

"I think," Davilof said, with slow intensity, "I think she's a soulless piece of devil's mechanism." And, turning

abruptly, he swung out of the box, slamming the door behind him.

Quarrington frowned. With his keen perceptions it was not difficult for him to divine what lay at the back of Davilof's bitter criticism. The man was in love, hopelessly in love with the Wielitzska. Probably she had turned him down, as she had turned down better men than he, but he had been unable to resist the bitter-sweet temptation of watching her dance, and throughout the evening had almost certainly been suffering the torments of the damned.

The artist smiled a little grimly to himself, remembering the many evenings he, too, had spent at the Imperial Theater, drawn thither by the magnetism of a white, slender woman with night-black hair, whose long, dark eyes haunted him perpetually, even coming between him and his work.

And then, just as he had made up his mind to go away, first to Paris and afterward to Spain or perhaps even farther afield, and thus set as many miles of sea and land as he could betwixt himself and the "kind of woman he had no place for," fate had played him a trick and sent her out of the obscurity of the fog-ridden street straight to his very hearth and home, so that the fragrance and sweetness and charm of her must needs linger there to torment him.

He thought he could make a pretty accurate guess at the state of Davilof's feelings, and was ironically conscious of a sense of fellowship with him.

Lady Arabella's sharp voice cut across his reflections.

"I don't care for this next thing," she said, flicking at her program. "Mrs. Grey and I are going around to see Magda. Will you come with us?"

Quarrington had every intention of politely excusing himself. Instead of which he found himself replying:

"With pleasure—if Mademoiselle Wielitzska won't think I'm intruding."

Lady Arabella chuckled.

"Well, she intruded on you that day in the fog, didn't she? So you'll be quits." She glanced impatiently round the box. "Where on earth has Davilof vanished to? Has he," she added maliciously, "gone up in flame?"

Michael laughed involuntarily.

"Something of the kind, I fancy," he replied. "Anyway, he departed rather hurriedly."

"Poor Antoine!" Gillian spoke with a kind of humorous compassion. "He has a temperament. I'm glad I haven't."

"You have the best of all temperaments, Mrs. Grey," answered Michael, as they both followed Lady Arabella out of the box.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"The temperament which understands other people's temperaments," he added.

"How do you know?" she asked, smiling.

Lady Arabella was prancing on ahead down the corridor and, for the moment, Michael and Gillian were alone.

"We artists learn to look for what lies below the surface. If your work is sincere, you find when you've finished a portrait that the soul of the sitter has revealed itself unmistakably."

Gillian nodded.

"I've been told you've an almost diabolical genius for expressing just what a man or woman is really like—in character, I mean—in your portraits."

"I can't help it," he said simply. "It comes—it reveals itself—if you paint sincerely."

"And do you—always paint sincerely?"

He laughed.

"I try to. Though once I got hauled over the coals pretty sharply for doing so. My sitter happened to be a pretty society woman, possessed of about as much soul as would cover a threepenny-bit, and when I'd finished her portrait she simply turned and rent me. 'I wanted a taking picture,' she informed

me indignantly, 'not the bones of my personality laid bare for public inspection.'"

They were outside Magda's dressing room by this time, and Virginie, who had flown to her nursing the moment the dance was at an end, opened the door in response to Lady Arabella's peremptory knock. Gillian paused a moment before entering the room.

"Yours is a wonderful gift of perception," she said quietly. "It ought to make you—very merciful."

Michael looked at her swiftly. Her eyes seemed to be asking something of him, entreating. But before he could speak Lady Arabella's voice interposed remorselessly.

"Come in, you two. And for goodness' sake shut the door. There's draft enough to waft one to heaven."

There was no choice but to obey, and silently Quarrington followed Mrs. Grey into the room.

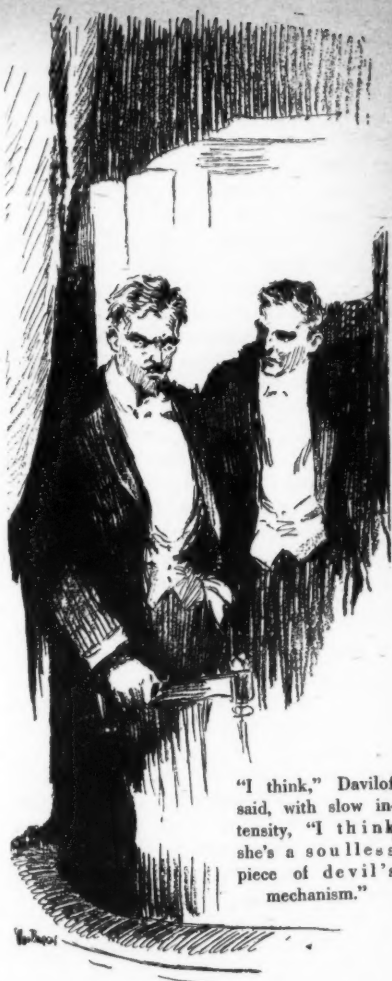
CHAPTER X.

Magda's dressing room at the Imperial Theater was something rather special in the way of dressing rooms. It had been designed expressly for her by the management, and boasted a beautifully appointed bathroom adjoining it, where Magda could luxuriate in a refreshing dip immediately after the strain and fatigue of her work on the stage.

She had been very firm about that bathroom, airily dismissing a plaintive murmur from the manager to the effect that they were "somewhat crowded for space at the Imperial."

"Then take another theater, my dear man," she had told him. "Or build! Or give the corps de ballet one less dressing room among them. But if you want *me*, I must have a bathroom. If I dance, I bathe afterward. If not, I don't dance."

Being a star of the first magnitude, the Wielitzka could dictate her own



"I think," Davilof said, with slow intensity, "I think she's a soulless piece of devil's mechanism."

terms, and accordingly a bathroom she had.

She had just emerged from its white-tiled, silver-tapped luxury a few minutes before Lady Arabella, together with Gillian and Michael Quarrington, presented themselves at her dressing-room door, and they found her before the fire, sipping a cup of steaming hot tea.

"I've brought Mr. Quarrington to see you," announced Lady Arabella. "I thought perhaps you'd like some other congratulations besides family ones."

"Am I permitted?" asked Quarrington, taking the hand Magda held out to him. "Or are you too tired to be bothered with an outsider?"

Magda looked up at him.

"I'm very glad to see you," she said quietly.

She appeared unwontedly sweet and girlish as she sat there, clad in a negligee of some soft silken stuff which clung about the lissom lines of her figure and with her satiny hair coiled in a simple knot at the nape of her neck. There was little or nothing about her to remind one of the successful *ballerina*, and Michael found himself poignantly recalling the innocent, appealing charm of the Swan Maiden. It was difficult to associate this woman with that other who had so unconcernedly turned down his pal, the man who had loved her.

"Well? Did it go all right?"

Magda's eyes sought Gillian's eagerly as she put the question.

"Did it go?" Mrs. Grey's voice held all the unqualified enthusiasm any artist could desire.

"Oh, Magda! It was wonderful! The most wonderful, beautiful dance I've ever seen!"

"And you know it as well as we do," interpolated Lady Arabella tartly, but smiling pridefully in spite of herself.

"Still, of course, she likes to hear us say it." Gillian championed her friend stoutly.

"The whole world will be saying it to-morrow," observed Quarrington quietly.

Here Virginie created a diversion by handing round cups of freshly brewed tea.

"You'll get nerves, drinking tea at this hour of the night," commented Lady Arabella, accepting a cup with alacrity, nevertheless.

"I take it very weak," protested Magda, smiling faintly. "It's the only thing I like just after dancing."

But Lady Arabella was already deep in conversation with Gillian and Virginie—a conversation which resolved itself chiefly into a laudatory chorus regarding the evening's performance. In the background Magda's maid moved quietly to and fro, carefully putting away her mistress' dancing dresses. For the moment Michael and Magda were to all intents and purposes alone.

"I shall not easily forget to-night," he said rather low, drawing a chair up beside her.

"You liked it, then?" she asked hesitantly, almost shyly.

"Like' is hardly the word."

Magda flashed him a swift glance.

"And yet," she said slowly, "I'm the 'type of woman you hate.'"

His mouth twisted a little.

"You make it rather difficult to maintain the point of view," he admitted.

She was silent a moment.

"You were very unkind to me that day," she said at last.

Their eyes met, and in hers was something soft and dangerously disarming. Quarrington got up suddenly from his chair.

"Perhaps I was unkind to you so that I might not be unkind to myself," he replied curtly.

Magda's soft laugh rippled out.

"But how selfish! And—and aren't you being rather mysterious?"

"Am I?" he returned pointedly. "Surely self-preservation is the first instinct of the human species?"

She picked up the challenge and tossed it lightly back to him.

"Is the danger, then, very great?"

"I think it is. So, like a wise man, I propose to avoid it."

"How?" she asked quickly.

"Why, by quitting the danger zone. I go to Paris to-morrow."

"To Paris?"

Magda experienced a sudden feeling of blankness. It was inexplicable, but somehow the knowledge that Quarrington was going away seemed to take all the savor out of things. It was only by a supreme effort that she contrived to keep her tone as light and unconcerned as his own as she continued:

"And then—after Paris?"

"After Paris? Oh, Spain possibly, or the antipodes!" he added with a short laugh.

"Who's talking about the antipodes?" suddenly chimed in Lady Arabella. "Home to bed's my next move. Gillian, you come with me. The car can take you on to Hampstead after dropping me in Park Lane. And Virginie can drive back with Magda."

"Yes, do go with Marraine," said Magda, nodding acquiescence in reply to Gillian's glance of interrogation. "I have yet to dress."

There was a general move toward the door.

"Good-by." Magda's slim hand lay for a moment in Quarrington's. "I—I'm sorry you're going away, Saint Michael."

Only Michael heard the last two words, uttered in that *trainant*, slightly husky voice which held so much of music and appeal. He turned abruptly and made his way out of the room in the wake of Gillian and Lady Arabella.

"You'd better postpone your visit to the antipodes, Mr. Quarrington," said the latter, as presently they all three stood together in the vestibule, halted by the stream of people pouring out from the theater. "I'm giving a dinner party next week, with a 'crush' to follow. Stay and come to it."

"It's awfully kind of you, Lady Arabella, but I'm afraid it's impossible."

"Fiddlesticks! You're a free agent, aren't you?" She was looking at him keenly.

A whimsical light gleamed for an instant in the gray eyes.

"I sometimes wonder if I am," he returned.

"There's only one cord I know of that can't be either unknotted or cut. And that's lack of money. That's not your complaint," she added significantly.

"No."

"So you'll come?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Magda has promised to dance for me," proceeded Lady Arabella, entirely disregarding his quietly uttered negative. "They're not giving 'The Swan Maiden' that night at the Imperial. She can't dine, of course, poor dear. Really, dancers have a lot to put up with—or rather, to put up without! Magda never dares to enjoy a good square meal. Afraid of getting fat, of course! After all, a dancer's figure's her fortune."

Like a low, insistent undertone beneath the rattle of Lady Arabella's volubility, Michael could hear again the murmur of a soft, dragging voice: "I'm sorry you're going away, Saint Michael."

It seemed almost as if Lady Arabella, with that uncanny shrewdness of hers, divined it.

"You'll come, then?" She smiled at him over her shoulder, moving forward as the crush in the vestibule lessened a little.

And Michael, with an odd expression in his eyes, answered suddenly:

"Yes, I'll come."

Later, as Lady Arabella and Gillian drove home together, the former laughed quietly. There was an element of pride and triumph in the laughter. Probably the hen who has reared a duckling and sees it sail off into the water experiences, along with her natural apprehension and astonishment, a somewhat similar pride in the startling proclivities evinced by her nursling.

"That nice artist man is in love with Magda," crowed Lady Arabella.

Gillian smiled.

"Do you think so?"

"I do. Only it's very much against his will, for some reason or other. Crossing from Dover to-morrow, forsooth!" she said with a broad smile. "Not he! He'll be at my party—and asking Magda to marry him before the week's out, bar accidents! After all, it's not surprising that the men are falling over each other to marry her. She's really rather wonderful. Where do you think she gets it all from, Gillian, my dear? Not from the Vallincourts, I'll swear!" she chuckled.

Mrs. Grey shook her head.

"I don't know. But I think Magda is a standing argument in favor of the doctrine of reincarnation. She always seems to me to be a kind of modern embodiment of Helen of Troy or Cleopatra."

"Only without the capacity for falling in love. She's as chilly as an iceberg and yet somehow gives you the idea she's all fire and passion. No wonder the men get misled, poor lams!"

"She's not cold, really," asserted Gillian positively. "Of that I'm sure. No one could dance as she does and be an iceberg."

Lady Arabella chuckled again, wickedly.

"A woman who can dance like that ought to be preceded through life by a red flag. She positively stirs my old blood, which has been at a comfortably tepid temperature for the last thirty years!"

"Some day," said Gillian, "she'll fall in love. And then——"

"Then there'll be fireworks."

Lady Arabella completed the sentence briskly just as the car pulled up in front of her house. She skipped nimbly out on to the pavement.

"Fireworks, my dear," she repeated emphatically. "And a very fine display, too! Good night."

The car slid away with Gillian inside

it reflecting rather ruefully upon the very great amount of probability contained in Lady Arabella's parting comment.

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Arabella's big rooms were filling rapidly. The dinner to which only a few of the elect had been bidden was over, and now those who had been invited to the less exclusive reception which was to follow were eagerly wending their way toward Park Lane.

The program for the evening promised to be an attractive one. A solo from Antoine Davilof, Lady Arabella's pet lion cub of the moment; a song from a leading operatic tenor; and afterward a single dance by the Wielitzska, who could never be persuaded to perform at any other private houses than those of her godmother and the Duchess of Lichbrooke, the former's half sister. So, in this respect, Lady Arabella enjoyed almost a monopoly, and such occasions as the present were enthusiastically sought after by her friends and acquaintances. Later, when the artistes had concluded their program, there was to be a dance.

The ballroom, the farther end of which boasted a fair-sized stage, had been temporarily arranged with chairs to accommodate an audience, and in one of the anterooms Virginie, with loving, skillful fingers, was putting the finishing touches to Magda's toilette.

Magda submitted passively to her ministrations. She was thinking of Michael Quarrington, the man who had come into her life by such strange chance, and who had so deliberately gone out of it again. By the very manner of his going he had succeeded in impressing himself on her mind as no other man had ever done. Other men did not shun her like the plague, she reflected bitterly.

But from the very beginning he had shown her that he disapproved of her fundamentally. She was the "type of

woman he hated!" Night and day that curt little phrase had bitten into her thoughts, stinging her with its quiet contempt.

She felt irritated that she should care anything about his opinion. But if she were candid with herself she had to admit she did care, intensely. More than that, his departure from England had left her conscious of an insistent and unaccountable little ache. The knowledge that there could be no more chance meetings, that he had gone right out of her ken, seemed like the sudden closing of a door which had just been opening to her. It had somehow taken the zest out of things.

"*Voilà!*" Virginia drew back to survey the results of her labors, turning for approval to Gillian, who was in attendance in her capacity of accompanist. "Is it not that mademoiselle looks *ravissante?*"

"Quite ravishing, Virginie," agreed Gillian. "Did you expect her to look anything else by the time you had finished decking her out?" she added teasingly.

"It is nothing that I do," responded the old Frenchwoman seriously. "Mademoiselle cannot help but be beautiful to the eye—*le bon Dieu* has created her *comme ça*."

"I believe He has," assented Gillian, smiling.

As she spoke, the bell of the telephone instrument on the table beside her rang imperatively and she lifted up the receiver. Magda, watching her face as she took the message, saw it suddenly blanch.

"Coppertop! He's ill!" she gasped.

"Ill?" Magda could hardly credit it. Two hours ago they had left the child in perfect health.

"Yes." Gillian swallowed, moistening her dry lips. "They've sent for the doctor. It's croup. Oh!" she cried despairingly, and let the receiver fall unheeded

from her grasp. "What am I to do? What am I to do?"

Magda stepped forward; the filmy draperies of the dress in which she was to dance floating cloudily about her as she moved: She picked up the receiver as it hung dangling aimlessly from the stand and replaced it on its clip.

"Do?" she said quietly. "Why, you'll go straight home of course. As quickly as the car can take you. Virginie!"—turning to the maid—"fly and order the car round at once."

Gillian looked at her distractedly.

"But you? Who'll play for you? I can't go! I can't leave you!" Her voice was shaken by sobs. "Oh, Coppertop!"

Magda slipped a comforting arm round her shoulder.

"Of course you'll go—and at once, too. See, here's your coat." She lifted the wrap from the back of the chair where Gillian had thrown it. "Put it on."

Hardly conscious of what was happening, Gillian allowed herself to be helped into the coat. Suddenly recollection returned.

"But your dance—your dance, Magda? You've forgotten!"

Magda shook her head.

"No. It will be all right," she said soothingly. "Don't worry, Gillyflower. You've forgotten that Davilof is playing here to-night."

"Antoine?" Gillian stared at her incredulously. "But you can't ask him to play for you! You'd hate asking him a favor after—after his refusal to accompany you any more."

Magda smiled at her reassuringly.

"My dear," she said, and there was an unaffected kindness in her voice which few people ever heard. "My dear, I'm not going to let a little bit of cheap pride keep you away from Coppertop."

She bent suddenly and kissed Gillian's white, miserable face just as Virginie

reappeared in the doorway to announce that the car was waiting.

"There, run along. Look, would you like to take Virginie with you?"

"Oh, no." Gillian shook her head decidedly. "I shall be quite all right. Oh, Magda!" she cried, impulsively drawing the slender figure close into her arms a moment. "You are good!"

Magda laughed a trifle bitterly.

"That would be news to the world at large!" she replied. Then, cheerfully: "Now don't worry, Gillyflower. Remember they've got a doctor there. And phone me presently about Coppertop. If he's worse, I'll come home as early as I can get away. Send the car straight back here."

As soon as Gillian had gone, Magda flung a loose wrap over her diaphanous draperies and turned to Virginie.

"Where is Monsieur Davilof? Do you know?"

"*Mais oui, mademoiselle!* I saw 'im through the doorway as I came from ordering the car. 'E is in the library."

"Alone?"

"*Oui, mademoiselle!*" Virginie nodded eloquently. "'E smokes a cigarette—to steady 'is nerves, *je suppose.*"

Magda went swiftly out of the room. She reached the hall by way of an unfrequented passage and slipped into the library, closing the door behind her.

"Antoine!"

At the sound of her voice Davilof, who had been standing by the fire, wheeled round.

"You!" he exclaimed violently. "You!" And then he remained silent, staring at her.

"You knew I was dancing here to-night," she said chidingly. "Why are you so startled? We were bound to meet, weren't we?"

"No, we were not. I proposed leaving the house the moment my solo was over."

Magda laughed a little.

"So afraid of me, Antoine?" she mocked gently.

He made no answer, but his hands, hanging at his sides, clenched suddenly.

Magda advanced a few steps toward him and paused.

"Davilof," she said quietly. "Will you play for me to-night?"

He looked at her, puzzled.

"Play for you?" he repeated. "But you have Mrs. Grey."

"No. She can't accompany me this evening."

"And you ask me?" His voice held blank amazement.

"Yes. Will you do it?"

"Do you remember what I told you the last time we met? That I would never play for you again?"

Magda drew her breath slowly. It was hurting her pride far more than Gillian knew or could imagine to ask a favor of this man. And he wasn't going to make it easy for her, either; that was evident. But she must ask it, nevertheless. For Gillian's sake; for the sake of poor little Coppertop fighting for breath and with no "mummie" at hand to help and comfort him; and for the sake of Lady Arabella, too. After promising to dance for her she couldn't let her godmother down by crying off at the last moment, when all the world and his wife had come crowding to her house on the strength of that promise.

So she bent her head in response to Davilof's contemptuous question.

"Yes, I remember," she said quietly.

"And you still ask me to play for you?"

"I still ask you."

Davilof laughed.

"You amaze me! And supposing I reply by saying I refuse?"

"But you won't," dared Magda.

Davilof's eyes held something of cruelty in their hazel depths as he answered quietly:

"On the contrary—I do refuse."

Her hand went up to her throat. It was going to be more difficult even than she had anticipated!

"There is no one else who can play for me as you do," she suggested.

"No," he said fiercely. "Because no one loves you as I do."

"What is the use of saying you love me when you won't do one little thing I ask?" she retorted. "It is not often that I ask favors. And—and no one has ever refused me a request before."

Davilof could hear the note of proud resentment in her voice, and he realized to the full that, in view of all that had passed between them in the mirror room, it must have been a difficult matter for a woman of Magda's temperament to bring herself to ask his help.

But he had no intention of sparing her. None but himself knew how bitterly she had hurt him, how cruelly she had stung his pride, when she had flung him that contemptuous command: "I shall want you to-morrow, Davilof—same time." He had unveiled his very soul before her, and in return she had tossed him an order as if he were a lackey who had taken a liberty. All his pain and brooding resentment came boiling up to the surface.

"If I meant anything to you," he said slowly, "if you had even looked upon me as a friend, you could have asked what you liked of me. But you showed me once, very clearly, that in your eyes I was nothing more than your paid accompanist. Very well, then! Pay me—and I'll play for you to-night."

"Pay you?"

"Oh, not in money," he said with a short laugh.

"Then—then what do you mean?" Her face had whitened a little.

"It's quite simple. Later on there is to be a dance. Give me a dance with you!"

Magda hesitated. Under other circumstances she would have refused point-blank. Davilof had offended her,

and more than that, the revelation of the upsettingly vehement order of his passion for her that day in the mirror room had frightened her not a little. There was something stormy and elemental about it. To the caloric Pole, love was love, and the fulfillment of his passion for the adored woman the supreme necessity of life.

Realizing that she had to withstand an ardor essentially un-English in its violently inflammable quality, Magda was loath to add fuel to the flame. And if she promised to dance with Davilof she must let him hold her in his arms, risk that dangerous proximity which, she knew now, would set the man's wild pulses racing unsteadily and probably serve as the preliminary to another tempestuous scene.

"Well?" Davilof broke in upon her self-communings. "Have I asked too high a price?"

Time was flying. She must decide, and decide quickly. She took her courage in both hands.

"No," she returned quietly. "I will dance with you, Antoine."

He bowed.

"Our bargain is complete, then," he said ironically. "I shall be charmed to play for you, maidemoiselle."

An hour or so later the last burst of applause had died away and the well-dressed crowd which had sat in enthralled silence while the Wielitzska danced emerged chattering and laughing from the great ballroom.

Their place was immediately taken by deft, felt-slipped men who proceeded swiftly to clear away the seats and the druggut which had been laid to protect the surface of the dancing floor. In the twinkling of an eye, as it were, they transformed what had been to all intents and purposes a concert hall into a flower-decked ballroom, while the members of the band engaged for the dance began climbing agilely into their



She threw a quick, nervous glance in the direction of the motionless figure, thinking it might be Davilof himself.

allotted places on the raised platform, preparatory to tuning up for the evening's work.

Magda, released at last from Virginie's worshipfully careful hands, came slowly down the main staircase. She was in black, diaphanous and elusive, from which her flower-pale face and shoulders emerged like a water lily starring the dark pool on which it floats. A crimson rose glowed just above her heart, that and her softly scarlet lips the only touches of color against her rare black-and-white loveliness.

She was descending the stairs reluctantly, mentally occupied in screwing up courage to fulfill her promise to Davilof. A phone message from Friars' Holm had come through saying that Coppertop was better. All danger was passed and there was no longer any need for her to return early. So it remained, now, for her to keep her pact with the musician.

As she rounded the last bend of the staircase, she saw that a man was standing with bent head at the foot of the stairs, apparently waiting for some one, and she threw a quick, nervous glance in the direction of the motionless figure, thinking it might be Davilof himself. It would be like his eager impatience to await her coming there. Then, as the lights gleamed on fair, crisply waving hair, she realized that the man was Michael—Michael, who she believed to be on his way to Spain!

Perhaps it was merely chance, or perhaps it was at the direct inspiration of Lady Arabella, but, whatever may have been the cause, Gillian had not confided to Magda that Quarrington was to be at her godmother's reception. The sudden, totally unexpected meeting with him, with this man who had contrived to dominate her thoughts so inexplicably, startled a little cry of surprise from her lips. She drew back abruptly, and then—quite how it happened she could

not tell—she missed her footing and fell.

For the fraction of a second she experienced a horrible sensation of utter helplessness to save herself; then Michael's arms closed round her as he caught her before she reached the ground.

The shock of the fall stupefied her for a moment. She lay against his breast like a terrified child, clinging to him convulsively.

"It's all right," he murmured soothingly. "You're quite safe."

Unconsciously his arms tightened round her. His breath quickened. The satin-soft hair had brushed his cheek as she fell; the pale, exquisite face and warm white throat lay close beneath his lips—all the fragrant beauty of her gathered unresisting against his heart. He had only to stoop his head.

With a stifled exclamation he jerked himself backward, squaring his shoulders, and released her, though he still steadied her with a hand beneath her arm.

"There, you are all right," he said reassuringly. "No bones broken."

The commonplace words helped to restore her poise.

"Oh! Thank you!" The words came a little gaspingly still. "I—I don't know how I came to fall like that. I think you startled me—I didn't expect to see you here."

"I didn't expect to be here," he returned, smiling a little.

Magda did not ask how it had come to pass. For the moment it was enough for her that he *was* there, that he had not gone away! She was conscious of a sudden incomprehensible sense of tumult within her.

"It was lucky for me you happened to be standing just at the foot of the stairs," she said a little unsteadily.

"I didn't 'happen.' I was there of malice prepense"—the familiar crooked smile flashed out—"waiting for you."

"Waiting for me?"

"Yes. Lady Arabella asked me to shepherd you into the supper room and see that you had a glass of champagne and a sandwich before the dancing begins."

"Orders from headquarters?" She smiled up at him.

"Exactly."

He held out his arm and they moved away together. As they passed through the crowded rooms one man murmured ironically to another:

"Quarrington's got it badly, I should say."

The second man glanced after the pair with amused eyes.

"So he's the latest victim, is he? I heard young Raynham's nose was out of joint."

"You don't mean she's fired him?"

The other nodded.

"Got the push the day before yesterday," he answered tersely.

"Poor devil! He'll take it hard. He's a hot-headed youngster. Just the sort to go off and blow his brains out."

Meanwhile Quarrington had established Magda at a corner table in the empty supper room and was seeing to it that Lady Arabella's commands were obeyed, in spite of Magda's assurances that she was not in the least hungry.

"Then you ought to be," he replied. "After dancing. Besides, unlike the rest of us, you had no dinner."

"Oh, I had a light meal at six o'clock. But, naturally, you can't consume a solid dinner just before giving a performance!"

"I'm not going to pay you compliments about your dancing," he observed quietly, after a pause. "You must receive a surfeit of them. But," he said, looking at her with those direct gray eyes of his, "I'm glad I didn't leave England when I intended to."

"Why didn't you?" she asked impulsively.

He laughed.

"Because it's so much easier to yield to temptation than to resist," he answered, not taking his eyes from her face.

She flushed a little.

"What was the temptation?" she asked uncertainly.

He waited an instant, then answered with deliberation:

"The temptation of seeing you again."

"I should have thought you disappointed of me far too much for that to be the case! Saint Michael," she added impulsively, "don't you think you're rather hard on me?"

"Am I? I had an old-fashioned mother, you see. Perhaps my ideas about women are out of date."

"Tell me them."

He regarded her reflectively.

"Shall I? Well, I like to think of a woman as something sweet and fragrant, infinitely tender and compassionate—not as a marauder and despoiler. Wherever she comes, the place should be the happier for her coming, not bereft by it. She should be the helper and healer in this battered old world. That's the sort of woman I should want my wife to be; that's the sort of woman my mother was."

"And you think I'm—not like that? I'm the marauder, I suppose?" she asked flippantly.

He remained silent, and Magda sat with bent head, fingering the stem of her wineglass restlessly.

"You like my dancing?" she said at last.

"You know I do."

"Well"—she looked at him with a mixture of defiance and appeal—"my dancing is me—the real me."

He shook his head.

"You're not the Swan Maiden, whose love was so great that she forgot everything except the man she loved, and paid for it with her life."

"The process doesn't sound exactly encouraging," she retorted with a flash

of dry humor. "But how do you know I'm not—like that?"

"How do I know? Because," he said boldly, "if you knew anything at all about love, you couldn't play with it as you do. Even the love you've no use for is the biggest thing the poor devil who loves you has to offer you; you've no right to play battledore and shuttlecock with it."

He spoke lightly, but Magda could hear the stern accusation which underlay the words. She rose from the table abruptly.

"I think," she said, "I think I'm afraid of love."

As she spoke, she made a movement as if to quit the supper room, but either by accident or design, Michael barred her way.

"Love," he said, watching her face intently, "means sacrifice, surrender."

"And you believe I'm not capable of it?"

"I think," he replied slowly, drawing aside to let her pass, "I think I'm afraid to believe."

Something in the deep tones of his voice sent a thrill of consciousness through her. She felt her breath come and go unevenly, and, afraid to trust herself to speak, she moved forward without response in the direction of the door. A moment later they were drawn into the stream of people wending their way by twos and threes toward the ball-room.

As they entered Antoine Davilof broke away from a little group of men with whom he had been conversing and came to Magda's side.

"The next dance is just beginning," he said. "Are you engaged? Or may I have it?"

"No, I'm not engaged," she answered.

She spoke rather flurriedly. She was dreading this dance with Antoine. She felt as if the evening had drained her of her strength and left her unequal to a

battle of wills should Antoine prove to be in one of his hot-headed moods.

She glanced round her with a hint of desperation in her eyes. If only Michael had asked her to dance with him instead! But he had bowed and left her as soon as the musician joined them, so there was no escape to be hoped for that way.

Davilof was watching her curiously.

"I believe," he said, "that you're afraid to dance with me."

On an impulse she answered him with perfect candor.

"I believe I am."

"Then why did you promise? You did promise, you know," he said sullenly.

"I know. I promised," she answered, still with the same absolute honesty. "I promised because Coppertop had croup and they had telephoned down for his mother to go to him. And you wouldn't accompany me unless I gave you this dance. So I promised it."

Davilof's eyes held a curiously concentrated expression.

"And you did this so that Mrs. Grey could go to her little boy—to nurse him?"

Magda inclined her head.

"Yes," she said simply.

"But you hated asking me—loathed it!"

"Yes," she said again.

He was silent for a moment. Then he drew back from her.

"That was kind. Extraordinarily kind," he commented slowly. His expression was one of frank amazement. "I did not believe you could be so kind—so womanly."

"Womanly?" she queried, puzzled.

"Yes. For is not a woman—a good woman—always ready to sacrifice herself for those she loves?"

Magda almost jumped. It was as if she were listening to an echo of Quarington's own words.

"And you sacrificed yourself," con-

tinued Davilof. "Sacrificed your pride—crushed it down for the sake of Mrs. Grey and the little Coppertop. Made-moiselle"—he bowed gravely—"I kiss your hands. And see, I, too, I can be generous. I release you from your promise. I do not claim that dance."

If any single thing could have astonished Magda more than another, it was that Davilof should voluntarily in the circumstances renounce the dance she had promised him. It argued a fineness of perception and a generosity for which she would never have given him credit. She felt a little warm rush of gratitude toward him.

"No, no!" she cried impulsively. "You shan't give up your dance." Then, as he still hesitated: "I should like to dance with you—really I should, Antoine. You've been so—so decent."

Davilof's face lit up. He looked radiant, like a child who has been patted on the back and told it is good.

"No wonder we are all in love with you!" he exclaimed in low, vehement tones. He added quickly, as he detected a flicker of apprehension in Magda's eyes: "But you need not fear to dance with me. I will be as your brother. I will go on being 'decent.'"

And he was. He danced as perfectly as any of his music-loving nationality can dance, but there was a restraint, a punctilious defense about him that, even while it amazed, availed to reassure Magda and restore her shaken confidence in the man.

She did not realize or suspect that just those two simple actions of hers—the good turn she had done Gillian at some considerable cost to herself in the matter of personal pride, and her quick recognition of the musician's sense of fair play in renouncing his dance with her when he knew the circumstances which had impelled her to promise it—these two things had sufficed to turn Davilof's heady, emotional devotion into something more enduring and perhaps

more dangerous, an abiding, deeply rooted love and passion for her which was stronger than the man himself.

He left the house immediately after the conclusion of his dance with her, and Magda was speedily surrounded by a crowd of would-be partners. But she felt disinclined to dance again, and, always chary of her favors in this respect, she remained watching the dancing in preference to taking any part in it, exchanging small talk with the men who, finding she could not be induced to reconsider her decision, clustered round her chair like bees round a honey pot.

It was toward the end of the evening that Michael Quarrington finally joined the group. Magda's eyes rested on him with a mixture of annoyance and approval; annoyance because she had expected him to ask her for a dance quite early in the course of the program and he had failed to do so, and approval because he was of that clean-cut, fair-haired type of man who invariably contrives to look particularly well groomed and thoroughbred in evening clothes.

She had no intention of permitting him to request a dance at this late hour, however, and rose from her seat as he approached.

"Ah! You, Mr. Quarrington?" she said gayly. "I am just going home. It's been a charming evening, hasn't it?"

"Charming," he rejoined courteously. "May I see you into your car?"

He offered his arm, and Magda, dismissing her little court of disgruntled admirers with a small, gracious nod, laid her slim hand on his sleeve. As they moved away together the orchestra broke into the swinging, seductive rhythm of a waltz.

Quarrington paused abruptly.

"Don't go yet!" he said. "Dance this with me."

His voice sounded strained and un-

even. It was as if the words were dragged from him without his own volition.

For an instant the two pairs of eyes met—the long, dark ones with their slumberous fire brooding beneath white lids, and the keen, hawklike gray ones. Then:

"Very well," she answered a trifle breathlessly.

She was almost glad when the waltz came to an end. They had danced it in utter silence, a tense, packed silence, vibrant with significances half hidden, half understood, and she found herself quivering with a strange uncertainty and nervousness as she and Quarrington together made their way into the dim-lit quiet of the winter garden opening off the ballroom.

Overhead the green, shining leaves of stephanotis spread a canopy, pale clusters of its white, heavy-scented bloom gleaming starlike in the faint light of Chinese lanterns which swung from the leaf-clad roof. From somewhere near at hand came the silvery, showering plash of a fountain playing—a delicate and aerial little sound against the robust harmonies of the band, like the notes of a harp.

It seemed to Magda as if she and Michael had left the world behind them and were quite alone, infolded in the sweet-scented, tender silence of some Garden of Eden.

They stood together without speaking. In every tingling nerve of her she was acutely conscious of his proximity and of some rapidly rising tide of emotion mounting within him. She knew the barrier against which it beat and a little cry escaped her, forced from her by some impulse that was stronger than herself.

"Oh, Saint Michael! Can't you—can't you believe in me?"

He swung round at the sound of her voice and the next moment she was

crushed against his breast, his mouth on hers, his kisses burning their way to her very heart.

Then voices, quick, light footsteps. Some one else had discovered the Eden of the winter garden, and Michael released her abruptly.

Behind the chimney stacks the gray fingers of dawn were creeping up into the sky as Magda drove home. In the wan light her face looked unusually pale, and beneath the soft laces at her breast her heart throbbed unevenly.

Five minutes ago Michael had held her in his arms and she had felt herself stirred to a sudden passionate surrender and response which frightened her.

Was this love—the love against which Diane had warned her? It had all happened so suddenly—that last, unpremeditated dance, those tense, vibrant moments in the winter garden, then the jarring interruption of other couples seeking its fragrant coolness. And she and Michael suddenly apart.

Afterward, only the barest conventionalities had passed between them. Nothing else had seemed possible. Their solitude had been ruthlessly destroyed; the outside world had thrust itself upon them without warning, jerking them back to the self-consciousness of suddenly arrested emotion.

"I must be going." The stilted, banal little phrase had fallen awkwardly from Magda's lips, and Quarrington had assented without comment.

She felt confused and bewildered. What had he meant? Had he meant anything at all? Was it possible that he believed in her now, trusted her? It had been in answer to that low, imploring cry of hers: "Saint Michael, can't you believe in me?" that he had taken her in his arms.

Looking out through the mist-blurred window at the pale streamers of dawn-light penciling the sky, Magda's eyes grew wistful, wonderingly questioning

the future. Was she, too, only waiting for the revelation of dawn—the dawn of that mysterious thing called love, which can transmute this everyday old world of ours into heaven or hell?

Gillian was at the door to welcome her when at length the car pulled up at Friars' Holm. She looked rather white and there were purple shadows under her eyes, but her lips smiled happily.

"Coppertop? How is he?" asked Magda quickly.

"Sleeping, thank God! He's safe now! But—oh, Magda! It's been awful!"

And quite suddenly Gillian, who had faced Death and fought him with a dogged courage and determination which had won the grave-eyed doctor's rare approval, broke down and burst into tears.

Magda petted and soothed her, until at last her sobs ceased and she smiled through her tears.

"I am a fool!" she said, dabbing at her eyes with a moist, screwed-up ball of something that had once been a handkerchief. "But I'm quite recovered now—really. Come and tell me about everything. Did Davilof play for you, all right? And did you enjoy the dance afterward? And oh, I forgot! There's a letter for you on the mantelpiece. It was delivered by hand while we were both at Lady Arabella's."

Mechanically, as she responded to Gillian's rapid fire of questions, Magda picked up the square envelope propped against the clock and slit open the flap. It was probably only some note of urgent invitation; she received dozens of them.

An instant later a half-stifled cry broke from her. Gillian turned swiftly.

"What is it?" she asked, a note of apprehension sharpening her voice.

Magda stared at her dumbly. Then she held out the letter.

"Read it," she said flatly. "It's from Kit Raynham's mother."

Gillian's eyes flew along the two brief lines of writing.

Kit has disappeared. Do you know where he is?
—ALICIA RAYNHAM.

CHAPTER XII.

At breakfast the next morning Magda was in a curiously petulant and uncertain mood. To some extent her fractiousness was due to natural reaction after the emotional excitement of the previous evening. Granted the discovery of the Garden of Eden, and add to this the almost immediate intrusion of outsiders therein—for everybody else is an "outsider" to the pair in possession—and any woman might be forgiven for suffering from slightly frayed nerves the following day. And in Magda's case she had been already rather keyed up by finding the preceding few days punctuated by unwelcome and unaccustomed happenings.

They all dated from the day of the accident which had befallen her in the fog. It almost seemed as if that gray curtain of fog had been a symbol of the shadow which was beginning to dog her footsteps—the shadow which stern moralists designate "unpleasant consequences."

First there had been Michael Quarington's plain and candid utterance of his opinion of her. Then had followed Davilof's headlong wooing and his refusal, when thwarted, to play for her again. He, too, had not precisely glossed things over in that tirade of accusation and reproach which he had leveled at her.

And now, just when it seemed as if she had put these other ugly happenings behind her, Kit Raynham, who, for the last six months had been one of the little court of admirers which surrounded her, had seen fit to complicate matters by vanishing without explanation; while his mother, in an absurd maternal flurry of anxiety as to what had become of

him, must needs write to her, as if it inevitably followed that she was responsible for his disappearance!

Magda was conscious of an irritated sense of injury, which Gillian's rather apprehensive little comments on the absence of further news concerning young Raynham scarcely tended to allay.

"Oh, don't be tiresome, Gillian!" she exclaimed. "The boy's all right. I expect he's been having a joy day, which has prolonged itself a bit."

"It seems he hasn't been seen or heard of since the day before yesterday," responded Gillian gravely. "They're afraid he may—may have committed suicide." She brought out the words with a rush. "They've been dragging the lake at his home."

Magda flared.

"Where did you hear all this—this nonsense? You said nothing about it last night."

"Lady Raynham told me. She rang up half an hour ago, before you were down, to ask if by any chance we had had any news of him," replied Gillian gently.

Magda pushed away her plate and, leaving her breakfast unfinished, moved restlessly across to the window.

"There's nothing about it in this morning's paper, is there?" she asked. Her tone sounded apprehensive.

Gillian's eyes grew suddenly compassionate.

"Yes. There is—something," she returned, laying her hand quickly over the newspaper, as if to withhold it.

But Magda swung round and snatched it from her. Gillian half rose from her chair.

"Don't look—don't read it, Magda!" she entreated hastily.

The other made no response. Instead, she deliberately searched the columns of the paper until she found a paragraph headed: "Disappearance of the Honorable Kit Raynham."

No exception could reasonably be

taken to the paragraph in question. It gave a brief résumé of Kit Raynham's short life up to date, referred to the distinguished career which had been predicted for him, and, in mentioning that he was one of the set of brilliant young folks of whom Magda Wielitzska, the well-known dancer, was the acknowledged leader, it conveyed a very slightly veiled hint that he, in particular, was accounted one of her most devoted satellites. The sting of the paragraph lay in its tail.

It will be tragic, indeed, if it should eventually transpire that a young life so full of exceptional promise has foundered in seas which only a seasoned swimmer should essay.

It was easy enough for Magda to read between the lines. If anything had happened to Kit Raynham, if it were ultimately found that he had taken his own life, society at large was prepared to censure her as more or less responsible for the catastrophe!

Side by side with this paragraph was another, a panegyric on the perfection of the Wielitzska's dancing as a whole and dwelling particularly upon her brilliant performance of "The Swan Maiden."

To Magda, the juxtaposition of the two paragraphs was almost unendurable. That this supreme success should be marred and overshadowed by a possible tragedy! She flung the newspaper to the ground.

"I think—I think the world's going mad!" she exclaimed in a choked voice.

Gillian looked across at her. Intuitively she apprehended the mental conflict through which her friend was passing, the nervous apprehension and resentment of the artiste that any extraneous happening should infringe upon her success contending with the genuine regret she would feel if some untoward accident had really befallen Kit Raynham. And behind both these that strange, aloof detachment which seemed part of the very fiber of her nature, and which Gillian knew would

render it almost impossible for her to admit or even realize that she was in any way responsible for Kit Raynham's fate, whatever it might be.

Of what had taken place in the winter garden at Lady Arabella's Gillian was, of course, in ignorance, and she had therefore no idea that the intrusion of Kit Raynham's affairs at this particular juncture was doubly unwelcome. But she could easily see that Magda was shaken out of her customary sangfroid.

"Don't worry, Magda." The words sprang consolingly to her lips, but before she could give them utterance Melrose opened the door and announced that Lady Raynham was in the library. Would Mademoiselle Wielitzka see her?

The old man's face wore a look of concern. They had heard all about the disappearance of Lady Raynham's son in the servants' hall; the evening papers had had it. Moreover, it always seems as if there exists a species of wireless telegraphy by which the domestic staff of any household, great or small, speedily becomes acquainted with everything good, bad, or indifferent—and particularly, bad!—which affects the folks "abovestairs."

A brief, uncomfortable pause succeeded Melrose's announcement; then Magda walked quietly out of the room into the library.

Lady Raynham rose from a low chair near the fire. She was a little, insignificant woman, rather unfashionably attired, with neat gray hair and an entirely undistinguished face, but as she stood there, motionless, waiting for Magda to come up to her, she was quite unconsciously impressive, transformed by that tragic dignity with which great sorrow invests even the most commonplace of people.

Her thin, middle-aged features looked drawn and puckered by long hours of strain. Her eyes were red-rimmed with

sleeplessness. They searched Magda's face accusingly before she spoke.

"What have you done to my son?"

"Where is he?" Magda's answering question came in almost breathless haste.

"You don't know?"

Lady Raynham sat down suddenly. Her legs were trembling beneath her, had been trembling uncontrollably even as she nerved herself to stand and confront the woman at whose door she laid the ruin of her son. But now the spurt of nervous energy was exhausted and she sank down into her chair, thankful for its support.

"I don't know where he is," she said tonelessly. "I don't even know whether he is alive or dead."

She fumbled in the wrist bag she carried, and, withdrawing a crumpled sheet of note paper, held it out. Magda took it from her mechanically, recognizing with a queer tightening of the muscles of her throat the boyish handwriting which sprawled across it.

"You want me to read this?" she asked.

"You've got to read it," replied the other harshly. "It is written to you. I found it—after he'd gone."

Her gaze fastened on Magda's face and clung there unwaveringly while she read the letter.

It was a wild, incoherent outpouring, the headlong confession of a boy's half-crazed infatuation for a beautiful woman, a pathetic enough document in its confused medley of passionate demand and boyish humbleness. The tragic significance of it was summed up in a few lines at the end—lines which seemed to burn themselves into Magda's brain:

I suppose it was cheek, my hoping you could ever care, but you were so sweet to me you made me think you did. I know now that you don't—that you never really cared a brass farthing, and I'm going right away. The same world can't hold us both any longer. So I'm going out of it.



He swung around at the sound of her voice, and the next moment she was crushed against his breast, his mouth on hers, his kisses burning their way to her very heart.

Magda looked up from the scrawled page and met the gaze of the sad, merciless eyes which were fixed on her.

"Couldn't you have let him alone?" Lady Raynham spoke in a low, difficult voice. "You have men enough to pay you compliments and run your errands. I had only Kit. Couldn't you have let me keep him? What did you want with my boy's love? You'd nothing to give him in return!"

"I had!" protested Magda indignantly. "You're wrong. I was very fond of Kit. I gave him my friendship."

Her indignation was perfectly sincere. To her it seemed that Lady Raynham was taking up a most unwarrantable attitude.

"Friendship?" repeated the latter with bitter scorn. "Friendship? Then God help the boys to whom you give it! Before Kit ever met you he was the best and dearest son a woman could have had. He was keen on his work—wild to get on! And he was so gifted it looked as if there were nothing in his profession that he might not do. Then you came! You turned his head, filled his thoughts to the exclusion of all else—work, duty, everything that matters to a lad of twenty-two. You spoiled his chances—spoiled his whole life! And now I've lost him! I don't know where he is—whether he is dead or alive!" She paused. "I think he's dead," she said dully.

"I'm sorry if—"

"Sorry!" Lady Raynham interrupted hysterically. Her composure was giving way under the strain of the interview. "Sorry if my son has taken his own life!"

"He hasn't!" asserted Magda desperately. "He was far too sensible and—and ordinary."

"Yes," Lady Raynham said bitterly. "Till you turned his head!"

She rose and walked toward the door, as if she had said all she came to say.

Magda sprang to her feet.

"I won't—I won't be blamed like that!" she exclaimed rebelliously. "It's unfair! Can I help it if your son chooses to fall in love with me? You—you might as well hold me responsible because he is tall or short or good or bad!"

The other stopped suddenly on her way to the door, as if arrested by that last defiant phrase.

"I do," she said sternly. "It's women like you who *are* responsible whether men are good—or bad."

In silence Magda watched the small, unassuming figure disappear through the doorway. She felt powerless to frame a reply, nor had Lady Raynham waited for one. If her boy were indeed dead—dead by his own hand—she had at least cleared his memory, laid the burden of the mad, rash act he had committed on the shoulders which deserved to bear it.

Normally a shy, retiring kind of woman, loathing anything in the nature of a scene, the tragedy which had befallen her son had inspired Alicia Raynham with the reckless courage of a tigress defending its young. And now that the strain was over and she found herself once more in her brougham, driving homeward with the familiar clip-clop of the fat old carriage horse's hoofs in her ears, she shrank back against the cushions, marveling at the temerity which had swept her into the Wielitzska's presence and endowed her with words which cut like a two-edged sword.

Like a two-edged sword in very truth! Lady Raynham's final thrust, stabbing at her with its stern denunciation, brought back vividly to Magda Michael Quarington's bitter speech: "I've no place for your kind of woman."

And side by side with the recollection came a sudden dart of fear. How would all this stir about Kit Raynham—the impending gossip and the censure

which seemed likely to be accorded her—*affect* him? Would he judge her again, as he had judged her before?

She was conscious of a fresh impulse of anger against Lady Raynham. She had wanted to forget the past, blot it all out of her memory, and out of the memory of the man whose contempt had hurt her more than anything in her whole life before. And now it seemed as if everything were combining to emphasize those very things which had earned his scorn.

But, apart from a certain apprehension as to how the whole affair might appear in Michael's eyes, she was characteristically unimpressed by her interview with Lady Raynham.

"I don't see," she told Gillian indignantly, "that I'm to blame because the boy lost his head. His mother was—stupid."

Gillian regarded her considerably. To her the whole pitiful tragedy was so clear. She could envisage the point of view of Kit's mother only too well, and sympathize with it. Yet, understanding Magda better than most people did, she realized that the dancer was hardly as culpable as Lady Raynham thought her.

Homage and admiration were as natural to Magda as the air she breathed, and it made very little impression on her whether a man more or less lost his heart to her or not. Moreover, as Gillian realized, it was almost inevitable that this should be the case.

The influences by which Magda had been surrounded during the first ten plastic years of childhood had all tended to imbue her with the idea that men were only to be regarded as playthings and that from the simple standpoint of self-defense it was wiser not to take them seriously. If you did, they invariably showed a disposition to become tyrants. Gillian made allowance for this. Nevertheless, she had no intention of letting Magda down lightly.

"I believe you were created without a soul," she informed her candidly.

Magda smiled a little.

"Do you know you're the second person to tell me that?" she said. "The idea's not a bit original. Michael Quarington told me the same thing in other words. Perhaps," she added meditatively, "perhaps it's true."

"Of course it's not true!" Gillian contradicted her warmly. "I only said it because I was out of patience with you."

"Everybody seems to be hating me rather badly just now." Magda spoke somewhat forlornly. "And yet—I don't think I'm any different from usual."

"I don't think you are," retorted Gillian. "But it's your 'usual' that's so disastrous. You go sailing through life like a beautiful cold star, perfectly impassive and heartless."

"I'm not heartless. I love you—and Mairaine. You surely don't blame me because I don't 'fall in love'? I don't *want* to fall in love," she added with sudden vehemence.

"I wish to goodness you would!" exclaimed Gillian impatiently. "If only you cared enough about anybody to do something really outrageous—run off with another woman's husband, even—I believe I should respect you more than I do now!"

Magda laughed.

"Gillyflower, I'm afraid you've no morals. And you here in the capacity of watchdog and duenna, too!"

"It's all very well to make a joke of everything. But I know—I'm sure this business about Kit Raynham is going to be more serious than you think. It's bound to affect you."

Magda stared at her blankly.

"What nonsense! Affect me! Why should it? How can it?"

"How can it?" asked Gillian with bitterness. "Every one will talk—more than usual! You can't smash up peo-

ple's only sons—not lovable, popular boys like Kit—without there being a fuss. You—you should have left a kid like that alone.”

And she went out of the room, banging the door behind her.

Gillian's prophecy proved only too accurate. People did talk. Kit Raynham had been a general favorite in society, and his disappearance, taken in conjunction with the well-known fact of his infatuation for Magda, created a sensation.

Even when the theory of suicide was finally disproved by his mother's receiving a letter from Australia, whither, it appeared, the boy had betaken himself and his disappointment, people seemed at first disinclined to overlook Magda's share in the matter. For a time, even her immense prestige as a dancer suffered some eclipse, but this, with a performer of her supreme artistry, was bound to be only a passing phase.

The world will always condone where it wants to be amused. And, now that the gloom of young Raynham's supposed suicide was lifted from the affair, there was a definite aroma of romance about it which was not without its appeal to the younger generation. So that gradually the pendulum swung back and Magda's audiences were once again as big and enthusiastic as ever. Perhaps even more enthusiastic, since the existence of a romantic and dramatic attachment sheds a certain glamour about any well-known artist.

All of which affected Magda herself comparatively little, though it irritated her that her actions should be criticized. What did affect her, however, absorbing her thoughts to the exclusion of all other matters, was that since the night of Lady Arabella's reception she had received neither word nor sign from Michael Quarrington.

She could not understand it. Had he been a different type of man, she might have credited him with having yielded

to a sudden impulse, kissing her as some men will kiss women, lightly and without giving or asking more than the moment's caress.

But Quarrington was essentially not the man to be carried away by a passing fancy. That he had cared for her against his will, against his better judgment, Magda could not but realize. But he had cared! She was sure of it. And he was the only man for whom her own pulses had ever beaten one whit the faster.

His touch, the sound of his voice, the swift, hawklike glance of those gray eyes of his, had power to wake in her a vague tumult of emotion at once sweet and frightening, and in that brief moment in the "Garden of Eden," when he had held her in his arms, she had been tremulously ready to yield, to surrender to the love which claimed her.

But the days had multiplied to weeks, and still the silence which had followed remained unbroken. As far as Magda was concerned, Michael seemed to have walked straight out of her life, and she was too proud and too much hurt to inquire among her friends for news of him. It was her godmother who finally tersely enlightened her as to his whereabouts.

Characteristically, Lady Arabella had withheld judgment regarding the Kit Raynham affair until it was found that he had betaken himself to Australia. But when the whole of the facts were evident, she allowed nothing—neither the romantic drama of the episode nor her own warm affection for her goddaughter—to obscure her clear-sighted vision.

Magda twisted her slim shoulders irritably when taken to task.

"I think I'm tired of being blamed for Kit Raynham's idiocy," she said, a note of resentment in her voice. "No one seems to consider my side of the question! I was merely nice to him in an ordinary sort of way and there wasn't

the least need in the world for him to have chucked up everything and rushed off to the other side of the world like that. *I couldn't help it!*"

Lady Arabella made a gesture of despair.

"I don't believe you could," she acknowledged helplessly. "I'm really beginning to have a sneaking sympathy with poor Hugh for shelving the responsibility of having brought you into the world. But at least you might refrain from baby-snatching!" she added wrathfully.

Magda protested.

"Marraine! You're abominable! Kit is twenty-four, if he's a day. And I'm barely twenty."

"That has nothing whatever to do with it," retorted Lady Arabella incisively. "Kit is a babe in arms, while you—you're as old as Eve." She paused. "Anyway, you've broken his heart and driven him to the ends of the earth."

"Where he'll probably paste together the pieces and offer the repaired article to some one else."

Lady Arabella looked up sharply. Cynicism was usually far enough away from Magda. She was too full of the joy of life and of the genuine delight an artist finds in his art to have place for it. Egoist she might be, with the unthinking egotism of youth, irresponsible in her gay acceptance of the love and admiration showered on her, but there was nothing bitter or sour in her composition. Lady Arabella, seeking an explanation for the unwonted, cast her mind back on the events of the last few weeks and smiled to herself.

"I suppose you know you've driven some one else out of England besides Kit Raynham?" she said.

"Whom do you mean?"

Magda spoke mechanically. A faint color crept up under her white skin and she avoided her godmother's keen gaze.

"That charming artist man—Michael Quarrington."

"Has—he left England?" Magda's throat felt suddenly parched. Then with an effort she went on: "You're surely not going to put the entire steamship's passenger list down to me, Marraine?"

"Only those names for which I happen to know you're responsible."

"You don't know about Saint Mi—about Mr. Quarrington. It's mere guesswork on your part."

"Most of the things we really know in life are mere guesswork," replied Lady Arabella sagely. "But in this case it—"

"Yes. In this case?"

There was a long pause. Then Lady Arabella answered slowly:

"In this case I'm speaking from first-hand information."

Magda's slender figure tautened. She moistened her lips.

"Do you mean that Mr. Quarrington told you he was leaving England on my account?" she asked.

"I don't often meddle, Magda—not really meddle." Lady Arabella's voice sounded unusually deprecating. "But I did in this instance. Because—oh, my dear, he's the only man I've ever seen to whom I'd be glad to give you up. He'd—he'd manage you, Magda."

Magda's head was turned away, but the sudden scarlet flush which mounted to her face surged over even the white nape of her neck.

"And he loves you," went on Lady Arabella, her voice softening incredibly. "It's only a man here or there who really *loves* a woman, my dear. Most of them whip up a hotchpotch of quite commonplace feelings, with a dash of passion, and call it love, while all they actually want is a good housekeeper and presentable hostess and some one to carry on the name."

No answer came from Magda, unless a stifled murmur could be regarded as

such, and after a few minutes Lady Arabella spoke again, irritably.

"Why couldn't you have let Kit alone?"

Magda raised her head.

"What has that to do with it?"

"Everything," answered Lady Arabella succinctly. "I told you I meddled. Michael Quarrington came to see me before he went away—and I know precisely why he left England. I asked him to go and see you before he sailed."

"What did he say?" The words were almost inaudible.

Lady Arabella hesitated. Then she quoted quickly:

"There is no need. She will understand."

To Magda the brief sentence held all the finality of the bolting and barring of a door. So Quarrington, like every one else, had heard the story of Kit Raynham! And he had judged and sentenced her.

That night in the winter garden he had been on the verge of trusting her, ready to believe in her, and she had vowed to herself that she would prove worthy of his trust. She had meant never to fall short of all that Michael demanded in the woman he loved. And now, before she had had a chance to justify his hardly won belief, the past had risen up to destroy her, surging over her like a great tidal wave and sweeping away the whole fabric of the happiness she had visioned.

She had not wholly realized before that she loved. But she knew now. As the empty weeks dragged along she learned what it means to long for the loved one's presence, the sound and touch of voice or hand, with an aching, unassuageable longing which seems to

fuse body and soul into a single entity of pain.

Outwardly she appeared unchanged. Her pride was indomitable, and exactly how much Michael's going had meant to her not even Gillian suspected, though the latter was too sensitive and sympathetic not to realize that Magda had passed through some experience which had touched her keenly. Ignorant of the incidents that had occurred on the night of Lady Arabella's party, she was disposed to assign the soreness of spirit she discerned in her friend to the general happenings which had followed from the Raynham episode. And among these she gave a certain definite place to the abrupt withdrawal of Quarrington's friendship, and resented it. She felt curiously disappointed in the man. With such fine perceptive faculty as he possessed she would have expected him to be more tolerant, more merciful in his judgment.

Once she had tentatively approached the subject, but Magda had clearly indicated that she had no intention of discussing it.

Not even to Gillian, whom she had gradually come to look upon as her closest friend, could Magda unveil the wound to her pride. No one, no one in the whole world, should know that she had been ready to give her love—and that the offering had been silently, but none the less decisively, rejected.

Diane's warning now found its echo in her own heart: "Never give your heart to any man. If you do, he will only break it for you—break it into little pieces like the glass scent bottle which you dropped yesterday."

"She was right," Magda told herself bitterly. "A thousand times right!"

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH.





Painting, Sculpture, *and* Story-Writing

They All Have Points in Common

THE first and original efforts of humanity in the way of art that we know anything about, the oldest pictures in the world, are scratched on the walls and roofs of certain caves in southern France and Spain.

A few tools and weapons, an occasional thigh bone or skull, once in a long time a skeleton, these and the tracings themselves are the only things the artists have left behind them. They lived a long time ago—at least fifteen thousand years before the Christian era, perhaps much longer ago than that—but art was art in those days, as now, and the same rules applied.

Toward the last they were beginning to get the use of color. Most of their work is flat outline. They were good draftsmen. We recognize readily enough, on the cave walls, the horse, the great bison, the elk, even man himself—the man tall and slim, the woman much fatter than is fashionable nowadays. The pictures give you a pretty fair idea of what life was like back in the neolithic.

The artist was hesitating in those days as to whether he was going to be a painter or a sculptor. He was the progenitor of both races. Two streams of art flowed away from his primeval watershed. On the one hand,

the sculptors began to cut away the stone a little bit at a time and allow the figure to come out, first in shallow, then in deep relief, then, finally, as a detached statue, standing free and alone. Each step was in the direction of giving further significance and meaning to the figure.

On the other hand, the painters began to use color to fill in their outlines. First they used it as a flat wash, as children do with water colors. Then they began to get the effect of light and shade. Finally they were painting. And so to-day we have Rodin and the great classic marbles on the one side, and a whole host of painters, from Raphael to Abbey and Whistler and Maxfield Parrish on the other. They are all trying to do the same thing.



MARGARET PEDLER

Story-writing has the same object as sculpture or painting. It is to show us human emotion and human character, to paint the world about us as it is, to glorify it a little when it is possible, to help people to understand each other, to make them wiser and gentler, to enrich and beautify life. Doubtless the men who traced the pictures in the caves of the Dordogne told stories, as well, but nothing in the way of their literature re-



EDITH BARNARD DELANO

mains. The older the stories are, the more we find them in simple outline, brief synopses that leave everything to the imagination. The evolution of writing has been, like the evolution of painting, toward a greater relief and significance.

It is all very well to say that a story to be good should be told in the fewest possible number of words and to cite O. Henry as an example. Like all good maxims, it can be wrongly applied. A story in which there is life and color, personal idiosyncrasy, the atmosphere of things and places and real people, will necessarily take more space than a bald, unvarnished narrative that is little more than an outline. Also, some of the French writers can get a lot of punch into a very small space, but their work is entirely different from ours. With very few exceptions, the masters of the short story in English need a little space in which to turn around.

Perhaps you yourself have sometimes analyzed a writer's style and wondered why he stopped to describe a gesture

or an intonation. If the writer was any good, he knew what he was doing. He was putting in the color. The better the writer the better he can make his words work for him. The really great writer is the one who can make a word do the work of a paragraph, who can give to your imagination a whole story in a phrase. But no writer can do good work without that power of observation and description that gives the illusion of actual visibility to his characters and places. Why is it we remember some stories for years, and forget others in a day? The color has a lot to do with it.

In the next number of SMITH's you will find a wide range of absorbing fiction distinguished for its charm and color. The opening story, "The Highbrow and the Highflyer," is a very human, humorous tale of adventure in New York, by Lee Foster Hartman. Its atmosphere is enchanting, its spirit gay, and its dénouement absolutely unexpected.

A story upon which we would like your opinion is "Promise," by Edith Barnard Delano. It seems to us a remarkably beautiful and thrilling love story—one of the finest we have ever published. And yet we hesitated to give it to you. You will understand why—when you have read it.

Margaret Pedler's splendid serial continues, its dramatic interest increasing with the generous third installment.

Another story of intense interest is the novelette by Virginia Middleton. Few writers excel Miss Middleton in the telling of real romance. "Fetters of Fear" is one of her best, and will appear complete in the next number.

The other fiction in the February number is on the same high plane, by writers equally representative of the best in current fiction. They have helped to make it a magazine far above the average.

New York Stage Successes



Call *the* Doctor

A DELIGHTFUL NEW COMEDY

By Jean Archibald

SOMETHING entirely new. A lady, making a specialty of adjusting domestic difficulties, will visit your home, study your case, find what is wrong, and prescribe in the strictest confidence. For further particulars address: Doctor of Domestic Difficulties, B. L., Dept. A."

This is the advertisement unhappy Catherine Mowbray reads through her tears. Ten years of married life with a husband who seems at times to forget her existence, who grows more and more irritable and absorbed in business,

have had their inevitable effect upon Catherine. She has allowed herself to "slump." Dowdy clothes and much weeping have dimmed her beauty; a gifted musician, she no longer touches the piano; and she continually irritates Howard with reproaches of his neglect.

But this "doctor of domestic difficulties" seems to offer a ray of hope. When her friend, Isabel Thomas, who is the kindly, middle-aged wife of an overdevoted husband, drops in, Catherine takes her into her confidence.

By Courtesy of the Author and of David Belasco, Producer.



JOAN (Janet Beecher): Now, Mrs. Mowbray, are you willing to follow my advice?

CATHERINE (Charlotte Walker): I put myself in your hands, doctor.

CATHERINE: Oh, Isabel, it's a terrible thing to feel your husband slipping away from you, slowly but surely, every day just a little further.

ISABEL: I don't know. I sometimes wish Ed would take a slide.

CATHERINE: Oh, you don't know what you're saying! It would be different if I didn't care for Howard. Yesterday I told you that something had to happen in this house very soon. Well, it is about to happen—but you must promise you'll never tell a soul.

ISABEL: Don't worry. If I told all the secrets I know, no one in this town would be speaking to any one else.

CATHERINE: Well—I'm putting my affairs—everything—into the hands of a doctor! A doctor of domestic difficulties—a specialist. I'm expecting her now—any moment. I've told Howard she was my classmate at Vassar, who is now a doctor, practicing in New York, and that I had invited her to visit me. I hated to lie to Howard.

ISABEL: Don't let a little thing like that worry you. Think of all the lies he's told you. There—I'm only guessing. It's a pretty safe guess about any man, except Ed. I really know very little about Howard. He hasn't put foot in my house for two years.

CATHERINE: Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if she could bring us together again!

When Joan Deering arrives Catherine and Isabel are delighted with her. She proves to be young and charming, very smart in her tailored suit and hat, very feminine, and, above all, very businesslike.

ISABEL (*consumed with curiosity*): You know, I never heard of a doctor of domestic difficulties before.

JOAN: No. It has been left to the lawyers, and they bungled it dreadfully. They usually work for divorce, while I work in the opposite direction.

CATHERINE: Oh, I'm so glad you're here! And you'll stay with me till matters are mended, won't you?

JOAN: Yes—if it's possible to mend them. Of course, some cases are incurable. But if it is taken in time, and people are sensible, I have great hopes. The trouble is you married women are too extravagant with your love.

ISABEL: Some women are. Is it too much to ask how you happened to take up this—er—work?

JOAN: Well, I drifted into it quite unconsciously. As a child, I was a natural born peacemaker. All my life I've been rather noted for that sort of thing. Not long ago I read an article which told how many thousand divorces there were in the United States



DUDLEY TOWNSEND (Philip Merivale): I beg your pardon—I just came to get my hat.

last year, and that American home life must be upheld if we would have good citizens, so I decided to go in for domestic difficulties. I have always wanted to do some good in the world, and I think this profession has great possibilities. I have a secretary now, and we are quite worn out with overwork.

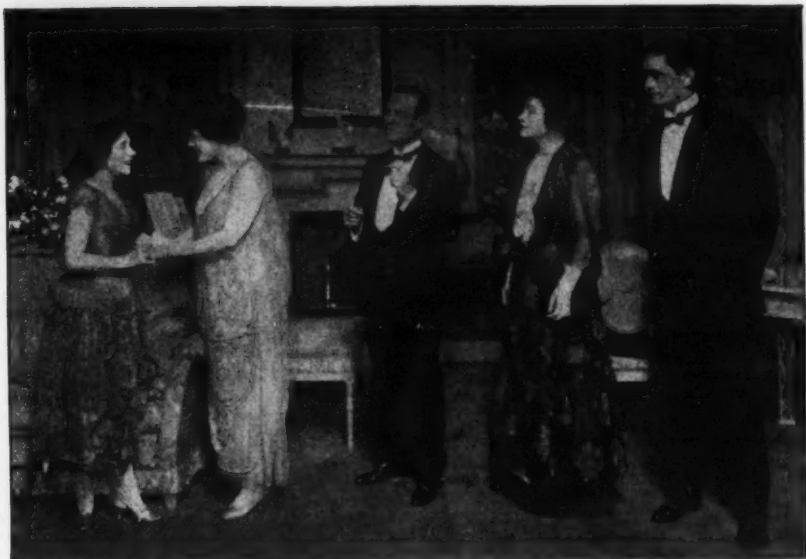
ISABEL: But it seems such an odd business for a woman.

JOAN: Why? Men go into other men's

offices to tell them how to run their business and find where the leakage is. Why shouldn't the adviser come into the home? When you marry and settle down and there's illness in the home, what do you do?

CATHERINE: You—you call the doctor.

JOAN: But when there is unhappiness, to whom do you go? Your people? No. *They* would say, "I told you so." And some old-lady relative always adds, "She made her



Balog-Mari (Fania Marinoff)

Joan (Janet Beecher) Howard Mowbray (William Morris) Catherine Mowbray (Charlotte Walker)

Dedley Townsend (Philo Mervale)

BALOG-MARI: Why, Joan, what a surprise!

bed and she must lie in it." I go to the home as a guest, study the situation, and prescribe, just as any other doctor would.

But the young specialist is somewhat perturbed to learn that Mrs. Mowbray has given her husband the impression that her expected guest is a doctor of medicine.

JOAN: But I'm not a doctor of medicine! Your husband must think I'm just a friend visiting you. I thought I made that clear in my letter. I don't know a thing about medicine—not a thing!

CATHERINE: Oh, dear! I'm so sorry. But I couldn't change it now and say you're not a doctor, could I?

JOAN: No—not very well. He would begin to suspect. Well, if you've said that I'm a doctor, I shall have to be a doctor, that's all. (*Taking out notebook with professional air*) Now, Mrs. Mowbray, tell me the symptoms—that is, the facts—and we'll find out the cause of your trouble and see what is best for you. Tell me just what Mr. Mowbray does that worries you.

CATHERINE: Well, he has become so utterly indifferent to me. He does so many

little things he wouldn't think of doing before. He leaves the house without kissing me, and I always meet him at the door with a kiss—and even that seems to get on his nerves.

JOAN: I should think it would.

CATHERINE: Oh, sometimes I look back and think of that wonderful time when I was the only thing in his life! He said there never was—never could be a love like ours.

JOAN: They all say that.

CATHERINE: He'd hurry home from the office every night. He said he wished he had a flying machine to get him here quicker. Now they have flying machines, and he doesn't come home at all. At first I made all sorts of excuses for him, but things have been growing worse and worse. I'm only a part now—a very small part—of his life, and to-day he admitted again that he wanted to break away. (*Weeping*) And I love him so! I love him so!

JOAN: Does he know about it?

CATHERINE: I tell him so every day of my life.

JOAN: Now we are getting at the cause of the trouble. After this, do not meet him at the door with the usual greeting. Let him

look for you, and when he finds you, you must be wearing your prettiest gown. Pardon me, but that dress you have on won't do. Let me see your shoes and stockings. Oh, my dear, don't you know anything about men at all? Don't you know what carries them three blocks past their own street? You couldn't expect him to come home in a flying machine to those!

CATHERINE: Howard never notices *what* I wear.

JOAN: Then you must wear something he can't help noticing. Have you any accomplishments? Do you play the piano?

CATHERINE: Yes, I play—or rather I *did* play the piano, but I've given it up.

JOAN: You played for your husband before you were married, and he liked your playing?

CATHERINE: Mother said it won his heart.

JOAN: And when you married him you gave it up. That isn't quite fair, is it? He falls in love with a girl who is attractive and entertaining—she makes herself so. When she's married to him it is too much trouble. The husband finds he hasn't married the girl he thought he married at all. He is naturally disappointed, and this is what happens. Now, what I want you to do is to *forget* you are married. Go back ten years, catch up the game there, and play it as it should be played.

CATHERINE: Oh, Doctor Deering, do you think there's hope?

JOAN: It's spring. Things that are dead come back to life—trees and flowers—and why not love? Have you any reason to believe there is any other woman in the case?

CATHERINE: No. But he *does* go to New York. He went twice last month.

One after another, various women in whom Howard might be interested are considered and eliminated until there remains only Alice Spencer.

CATHERINE: She lives here in West-mount, but she studies music in New York.

JOAN: You don't think they like each other too well, do you?

CATHERINE: Howard is *married*—how could they?

JOAN: Well, one hears of such things occasionally. Is she the persistent type? The sort that goes after other women's husbands?

CATHERINE: They say she is.

JOAN: Do you think Mr. Mowbray has ever met her in New York?

CATHERINE: I believe one time they *did* come home on the same train—but those things happen.

JOAN: They do, yes. Mind, I'm not saying there's anything *in* this, but I should like to see her. As you know her very well, I



HOWARD: I'm afraid it's pretty bad, isn't it? Has he cut an artery, doctor?

JOAN (*about to swoon*): Oh, it's blood!



NELLIE (Rea Martin): Well, I happened to hear you tell Mrs. Mowbray she should be indifferent to Mr. Mowbray, so I tried it on my gentleman friend and—I've lost him!

would suggest that you invite her for the week-end, and give me a chance to study the situation.

CATHERINE: I shall invite her if you wish it, but I know you are mistaken. Howard may have his faults, but I'm quite sure there is no other woman.

When Howard Mowbray returns, accompanied by Dudley Townsend, a young lawyer, who has recently been honored with Mowbray's business, Joan and Catherine are already dressed for the evening. Dudley is immediately impressed by the charming, but rather haughty, young doctor, and is easily persuaded to remain for dinner.

HOWARD (to JOAN): How long since you and Mrs. Mowbray have seen each other?

CATHERINE: Is it seven years, Joan?

JOAN: It's longer than that.

DUDLEY: I suppose you had no idea of being a doctor then.

JOAN: No, indeed. In fact, I'm rather surprised to find myself a doctor now.

DUDLEY: It requires courage for a young lady to take up such a profession, but I must say I admire you for it.

JOAN: Thank you. I don't deserve any credit. I just *had* to be a doctor.

HOWARD: Born in you, I suppose.

JOAN: No—rather force of circumstances.

Balog-Mari, a vivacious young Hungarian artist, who has been a guest next door while painting a portrait of Isabel, comes in with a message from the Thomases. At sight of Joan, who is an old friend, she exclaims delightedly. Catherine invites Balog-Mari to remain for the week-end with them.

JOAN: Mari, tell me—what are you doing in Westmount?

BALOG-MARI: I do a portrait of the beautiful Alice Spencer, and I finish one, also, of the Mrs. Judge Thomas.

DUDLEY: Oh, this is the Miss Balog? Your fame has spread all over Westmount.

BALOG-MARI (*bowing low*): Oh, you're kind! And Mr. Mowbray—he, too, knows that I am very fine at painting portraits. No?

HOWARD (*embarrassed*): Yes, yes—very fine!

CATHERINE: Howard, you never told me you knew Miss Balog.

HOWARD: Didn't I? Oh, I've often seen her working at the Thomases.

CATHERINE: Why, Mrs. Thomas told me to-day that you hadn't put a foot in her house for two years!

HOWARD: Oh, then it wasn't the Thom-

ases. It was somewhere else—in New York, wasn't it, Miss Balog?

BALOG-MARI: Yes—yes—in New York.

When the opportunity occurs, Dudley snatches it for a tête-à-tête with Joan.

DUDLEY: You know, doctor, you're not my idea of a lady physician. I can't see you feeling any one's pulse—I mean a man's.

JOAN: I'm sorry.

DUDLEY: I meant that as a compliment.

JOAN: Ah, I've found you out! You are

has the greatest power in the world without looking for it. The course is clear for her. She shouldn't waste herself on these everyday matters.

JOAN: How nicely you say it! You don't believe in the professional woman.

DUDLEY: Oh, yes, I do. Personally, I like the college girl. At what college did you study, doctor, after you left Vassar?

JOAN: Well, you wouldn't know it, I fancy. It's not well known in this country.



BALOG-MARI: But there is nothing to tell. Of Mr. Mowbray, I tell you I know nothing. I give you my word.

old-fashioned, after all, and think that all women have to live for is to make men happy. Come now, isn't it so?

DUDLEY: Well, no—not exactly. But by making men happy you can make them accomplish fine work in this world of ours, can't you? It takes a woman to do it, too. That's how the world moves on.

JOAN: And don't you think that women want to do things, too? Who is going to give them the inspiration?

DUDLEY: They don't need it. A woman

DUDLEY: Oh, in Europe, eh?

JOAN: I've been there, yes.

DUDLEY: What part?

JOAN: Oh, all over—all over—Italy—and Sweden—and—

DUDLEY: You studied in Sweden?

JOAN: Stockholm is such a dear little city.

DUDLEY: Yes; I've been there. Isn't that interesting? You speak the language, then. Vackert vader inte sannt. Sa ni har varit i sverige.

JOAN: Ja—nej—I don't speak it very well.

DUDLEY: Oh, doctor, that reminds me— After dinner would you mind driving over with me to call on my aunt Jane? She's broken her collar bone and several ribs. The cervical vertebrae—no, not the cervical—it was the middle section of the vertebrae that was injured. You know what I mean, Doctor Deering, the—er—er—what do you call it?

JOAN: Oh, the middle part! That's very serious—very. Such terrible things happen these days.

DUDLEY: I suppose it is pretty serious. What is the middle section of the spinal vertebrae?

JOAN (*nervously pulling at string of beads around her neck*): Well, the scientific name is—*is— (The string breaks and pearls go rolling about the floor.)*

DUDLEY: Oh, your necklace! What a pity! Look out—don't step on them! (*On the floor at her feet*) Here is one—here's another—and here's—

JOAN: Thank you. I think that's all. (*Suddenly*) Perhaps I'd better put them in my jewel box. You will excuse me, please. (*Exits upstairs just as HOWARD enters.*)

DUDLEY: She broke her necklace. (*Looking after her*) She's charming, Mr. Mowbray. I said—she's charming. What right has she to be a professional woman, I ask you? Wearing beads and so careless—er—and—she should be making some man happy.

HOWARD: But I thought you *approved* of the professional woman?

DUDLEY: I do, but she wasn't made for it. Very few women are. When they are, of course, they're wonderful; but—she's altogether too young. Advising all sorts of—er—male patients—

HOWARD: Catherine told me she doesn't take male patients.

DUDLEY: That's too bad—I mean, that's odd. She's right, though. Probably had a few unpleasant experiences taking the pulse of flirting old scamps. A trying profession for a woman. I can imagine her a physician of children—so gentle and so— How long has she been practicing?

HOWARD: How the devil should I know?

DUDLEY: I was asking the doctor what she thought of poor aunt Jane's chances.

HOWARD: What did she say?

DUDLEY: She didn't say—just then she spilled her beads. I can't understand how aunt Jane escaped being killed in that accident.

Attempting to describe to Howard the fallen tree, the iron posts, the steep

incline, and the skidding car, Dudley cuts his hand on an antique paper knife he has picked up. Howard is concerned.

DUDLEY: It's nothing—nothing at all. Just a scratch.

HOWARD: I don't know—it's bleeding. You must have it looked after. (*Rings for maid.*) Oh, I forgot—we have a doctor in the house! Call the doctor quickly, Nellie. Tell her an accident.

DUDLEY: Good idea. She can bandage it for me. You—we never can tell what these things will—er—lead to.

HOWARD: Does it hurt, old man?

DUDLEY: I think it does—a little—yes, terribly.

JOAN (*coming downstairs*): What is it? Who is hurt?

HOWARD: Mr. Townsend has cut his hand. Fortunately you are here, doctor. I'm afraid it's pretty bad, isn't it?

JOAN (*hesitatingly*): Oh, it's blood! (*With a low moan she drops to the floor in a swoon.*)

A few evenings later, Joan, studying a book on anatomy, and Catherine, moving about restlessly, are awaiting the arrival of Alice Spencer and Howard, who has gone for her in the car. Joan is disappointed that she has been unable to induce Balog-Mari to tell what she apparently knows of Howard.

JOAN: She could help us, but, try as I will, I can't get anything out of her.

CATHERINE: Perhaps she doesn't know anything, after all.

JOAN: Of course she does. Mr. Mowbray wouldn't have acted the way he did unless— She knows something, all right. She's lying to me. Well, I'll have to lie to her, that's all. I'll put Ananias to shame.

CATHERINE (*at the window again*): Do you think we did right to send Howard after Alice?

JOAN: Nothing was ever gained by keeping lovers apart. We'll soon see how far things have gone. (*Sitting down to study again*) The spine has twenty-seven curves—the—(*correcting herself*) the spine has four curves—cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and sacral— (*CATHERINE goes upstairs. DUDLEY enters, bringing a long box of roses for JOAN.*)

DUDLEY: Hello! Studying?

JOAN: Well, not exactly—brushing up a trifle. You know, one of our most noted



JOAN: You have a race on with Alice. It's not neck and neck now—it's ankle to ankle. Cross your knees like that and like this—you know, Alice's trick—mind over matter. Put a kick in each ankle.

New York surgeons has to study anatomy all over again every six weeks.

DUDLEY: I'm afraid I embarrassed you, doctor, by asking you to name a bone for me—when you were trying to forget bones.

JOAN: No, I wasn't *trying*.

DUDLEY: And there is something else I can never forgive myself for. Right on top of that I go and cut my hand, and cause you to faint.

JOAN: I never did such a thing before in all my life. It must have been because it was *your* hand.

DUDLEY: Do you mean that?

JOAN: I mean that I left the room and you were perfectly well, and I came back and your hand was all cut—and—ugh! But let's talk about something interesting.

DUDLEY: Mr. Mowbray's turned over all his business to me—I'm his legal adviser now. Do you know, Miss Deering, all my life I've been waiting for this opportunity, and now that it's come, well—do you know, doctor, you're going to play the very dickens with my practice?

JOAN: How?

DUDLEY: I'll be losing so much time coming over here.

JOAN (*laughing*): I had better go, then—so you won't lose so much time.

DUDLEY: Oh, no, no—don't go! I don't mind, really. One can always catch up, you know.

JOAN: I should love to hear you plead a case.

DUDLEY (*pleased*): Oh, would you, really? Do you still like Westmount?

JOAN: Oh, yes, I think it's a charming place. You like living here, don't you?

DUDLEY: I didn't, but I do *now*. After all, it isn't the place, is it? It's the people who live in it, isn't it? The most unattractive place in the world becomes attractive when you're with some one you lo—like. Doctor, we should keep you here.

JOAN: You mean—start a practice here?

DUDLEY: Oh, no—no—no—no. You were never meant for a professional woman.

Everything about you is so feminine. I told Mr. Mowbray, the first time I met you, you had no right to be a doctor.

JOAN: You told him the truth.

DUDLEY: Oh, doctor, let's go out on the porch or dodge this bridge game and take a long, long walk. Have you got a wrap or something? It's such a glorious night.

JOAN: Yes, that's just it—I'd better stay here. You must excuse me. I promised Mrs. Mowbray I'd help her dress and be here when Miss Spencer comes.

Catherine's clothes do not please Joan. With an impatient jerk she removes the high-necked yoke, long sleeves, and underskirt of the conservative black gown Catherine has donned. The transformation is striking, for Catherine is a beautiful woman. For a moment she stands, embarrassed.

CATHERINE: I never could feel comfortable in one of these low-down-cut things.

JOAN: You're not supposed to feel comfortable. You're supposed to look pretty.

CATHERINE: There's such a draft on the floor!

JOAN: You'll get used to it. (*The sound of an approaching motor is heard.*) Now, don't let on that you suspect. Treat her just as you've always done. When you meet her, say sweetly, "Oh, Alice, here you are at last!" If her conscience hurts a little, she'll probably call you "darling," and if it hurts more than a little, she'll probably say, "Oh, you darling, darling old dear!" And then she'll kiss you.

Miss Spencer's greeting fulfills the doctor's prediction. Her "darling, darling old dear!" accompanied by a kiss, startles Catherine. But she is graciousness itself as



ALICE SPENCER (Jane Houston): You know, the day you were married, Howard, I cried all day long.

she welcomes Alice and presents Doctor Deering.

JOAN: By the way, we have a mutual friend—Balog-Mari.

ALICE: Oh, yes! She painted my portrait. Balog-Mari is one of the few who paint you as you really are. She paints with such feeling! She gets "the light of the eye, the wet on the lip," as she says. I consider her one of the great artists. How well you look, Catherine! I don't think I ever saw you look so pretty. Doesn't she, Howard?

HOWARD: Yes—yes— Is that a new gown, Catherine?

CATHERINE: No—it's old.

HOWARD (*gazing at her, much impressed*): I never saw it before.

CATHERINE: You mean you never noticed it before. (*To Alice*) But you will want to go to your room now.

ALICE: Yes—we've had a dusty ride. But it's a wonderful night, isn't it, Howard?

HOWARD (*absorbed in watching CATHERINE*): Yes—yes—

CATHERINE (*alone with Joan*): What do you think of her?

JOAN: Home breaker! But one thing: he knows you're on earth again. My, how he stared at your back! I thought he was going to take a bite out of you. And when he caught a glimpse of—well, my dear, a pretty ankle has brought many a man to his knees. You have a race on with Alice. It's not neck and neck now; it's ankle to ankle. Cross your knees like that and this—you know, Alice's trick—mind over matter. Put a kick in each ankle.

CATHERINE (*eagerly*): I'll do my best.

Alone in the music room with Alice, Howard is obviously ill at ease.

ALICE (*at the piano*): Of course I'm fond of Catherine; but a week-end of bridge and such things—oh, dear! To tell you the truth, Howard, it was only for you that I came.

HOWARD: Well, I'm glad there was something that brought you.

ALICE: Mother had a fit, of course. A long ride in the dust and the night air for a girl with a voice won't do. (*Runs scales, her voice breaking.*) It just kills my throat. (*Suddenly*) You know, I've been watching you—you're afraid of your wife. Was him afraid of him's wife? Catherine looked charming to-night. I caught that look you gave her. Are you getting interested?

HOWARD: There is always a certain amount of interest in one's wife.

ALICE: Oh, dear, I wish some one was interested in me!

HOWARD: Well, I am, for one.

ALICE: But I had to make you say it, and if you treat me like that, I'm afraid I won't enjoy this visit very much.

HOWARD: Nonsense, Alice! I enjoy having you, you know that.

ALICE: Doctor Deering looked at me so strangely. I almost felt that I had done something wrong.

HOWARD: Oh, no—I don't believe you could do anything wrong.

ALICE: You don't suppose they've noticed that we are pretty good friends, do you?

HOWARD: Why shouldn't we be good friends?

ALICE (*singing softly*): "Love, here is my heart—one tender refrain."

HOWARD: Go on; finish the song.

ALICE: "Yours, if you keep it to-day; yours, if you throw it away." (*Looking up*) You do love music, don't you?

HOWARD: You know, Alice, I believe you are the only one in the world who really understands me.

ALICE: We don't have to understand those we care for. And you do care for me, don't you? You know, the day you were married I cried all day long. I accepted this invitation just to be with you, and you know it, too. You just want to hear me say it.

HOWARD: Yes—that's it—I just want to hear you say it.

ALICE: But you're not a free man. That's what hurts. I haven't got you—not that much! And, somehow, to-night, I feel I have you less than ever. Oh, Howard, say you do love me just a little—say it! (*JOAN, entering, senses that she has interrupted something more than a friendly tête-à-tête.*)

True to her plan, Joan takes Balog-Mari in hand. With apparent reluctance she tells the fiery little Hungarian artist of numerous uncomplimentary remarks made of her work by Miss Spencer, and Mr. Mowbray, too. Balog-Mari flies into a rage.

BALOG-MARI: Oh, so! I tell him what I think of him! And it is not so nice. When he first see me here he come to me and say, "Mum's the word." I promise, but now I spill it. Me—I don't count, but they insult my work—so now I tell everybody! I will—every damn thing I tell!

JOAN: Well, all right then.

BALOG-MARI: She say I am a rotten artist, eh? I make it hot for them! All the time I paint Miss Spencer—and Mr. Mowbray come every day to my studio—how always they meet there. He bring her flowers. He look long and seek at her portrait. All the



CATHERINE: And what do you think? I've had an offer to go in the chorus!

time she give him her hand to kiss, and he kiss and kiss. Once, when she think I do not see, she kiss him quick. Sometimes, to please them, I go out and leave them alone, and when I come back, if I do not make the noise at the door, I never know what I catch. And for this I am a rotten artist! (*Laughs hysterically.*) Damn fool! Thinks she cares for him—ha, ha! This is what she say to me: "I can take a man from any woman. Forbidden fruit is sweetest. That is the Inn." Madame Mowbray, she should geeve him to her, and then he might not be so sweet!

JOAN: That's a good idea, Mari.

BALOG-MARI: I get out. The devil should take them! (*Exits in anger just as CATHERINE enters.*)

JOAN: You called me just in time, Mrs. Mowbray. It's worse than I thought. Things like this must be nipped in the bud. Alice loves forbidden fruit, and she's begun to help herself. Now, you've got to make her think that Howard is *not* forbidden fruit. Give him to her. Beg her to take him off

your hands. Ask her what she sees in him that's attractive. It's conquest that appeals to her, and if you make it easy for her, there's nothing to it—she's out and on to the next.

With Joan's tactful, subtle assistance, Catherine has little difficulty in convincing Alice that she is really an indifferent wife.

CATHERINE: Alice, I want you to do something for me. Howard is in love with you—oh, I know all about it!—and you're in love with him.

ALICE: Supposing Howard does like me, can I help it? Sometimes I wish I were old and ugly, so women would stop accusing me of trying to steal their husbands. If you can't hold your husband, Catherine, it isn't my fault. Why should you come to me—

CATHERINE: Oh, don't misunderstand me. I'm not going to plead with you to give him up. What I want to know is—what do you see in him to love?

ALICE (*astounded*): Is it possible that you don't care at all for Howard?

CATHERINE: I know it seems strange to you. He bores me so at times that he drives me mad! You see, I was so young when I married him.

ALICE: Howard is very clever.

CATHERINE: Oh, no! In my wildest stretch of imagination I can't think that. I've looked and looked at him, and tried to make myself think that he is; but I know he isn't. It's just luck that's put him where he is.

ALICE: Catherine Mowbray! Do you mean to say you don't appreciate Howard?

CATHERINE: I do appreciate him. He's good-hearted and means well— But I'm serious about this. I want to know. There must be something I haven't found.

ALICE: Well, I'm sorry I can't help you. If you like a man, you like him, and if you don't, you don't. I think Howard is quite a wonderful man.

CATHERINE: I know men who are more wonderful.

ALICE: Oh, so do I! And of course, socially, Howard is rather stupid.

CATHERINE (*forgetting herself*): Oh, you

think so? (*Regaining her composure*) That doesn't express it. That's why I was so grateful when I heard that you were in love with him, for no other girl has ever looked at him since we were married. In my unhappy moments I've thought—well, Alice Spencer likes him, so he can't be so *bad*.

JOAN: But if some other woman really wanted him— There's your chance, Miss Spencer.

CATHERINE: Are you game, Alice? Will you take him off my hands quietly, without any scandal? I give him to you. He's yours.

ALICE: Why offer him to me? Of course, I can understand your feelings. No woman wants a man who isn't attractive to other women. But if you think I'm in love with Howard, you're mistaken. I don't want any woman's cast-off husband. Don't you think I can get a man of my own?

JOAN: Why, Catherine, it's absurd for you to think that Miss Spencer would be interested in a man who bored his wife!

ALICE: It's an insult, that's what it is! Why, I wouldn't care if I never saw Howard again. In fact, I'd rather not see him if I can avoid him. I have only to lift my finger.



CATHERINE: Now, Howard, don't! I won't go, I tell you! I—

HOWARD: You can't help yourself! See you later, Townsend. So long, doctor.



DUDLEY: Oh, doctor, I have a pain in my heart! I don't believe it's ticking right. Listen!

But please don't think I'm dependent on *his* attentions. He doesn't interest *me* any more than he interests you. So you see, I can't help you, Catherine, because I agree with you perfectly. He's all you say he is. But you women who are so anxious to marry forget it's for better or for worse. (*Coughs a little.*) You know, I caught a slight cold coming over—and I really feel I must see my throat specialist right away. So, if you don't mind, I'll have mother send the car. But don't let it spoil the week-end, will you?

Thus the little matter of Alice Spencer is disposed of. But the battle isn't won yet, and Joan proceeds to advise her client further. Howard, entering hurriedly, is amazed to find that Miss Spencer has gone home.

HOWARD: Why, she had no intention of leaving a few moments ago!

CATHERINE: Not while she was with you. What did she mean when she said she had only to lift her finger—to get you?

HOWARD: Now, isn't that like a woman? Can't take a joke? What did you say to her? Good Lord! Can't we have a guest in the house without insulting—

CATHERINE: That's right. Take her part—take her part—I knew you would.

HOWARD: You invited her. I didn't want her here in the first place.

CATHERINE: Then why did you take three hours to get here?

HOWARD: Oh, you were timing us! I suppose you spoke to her about it. I'll go to her, and—

CATHERINE: You can go to her when I'm gone. I'm going away—on a long visit.

HOWARD: That's a good idea. Where are you going? And when are you going?

CATHERINE: Oh, don't get your hopes aroused. I'll go when I'm ready. Well, at least you might say you'll miss me.

HOWARD: All right—I'll miss you.

CATHERINE: I wish we loved each other as we used to. It would be so much more interesting.

HOWARD (*rising*): You mean to say you don't love me any more?

CATHERINE: I don't know—I don't know. I'm getting out. (*Exits hastily upstairs.*)

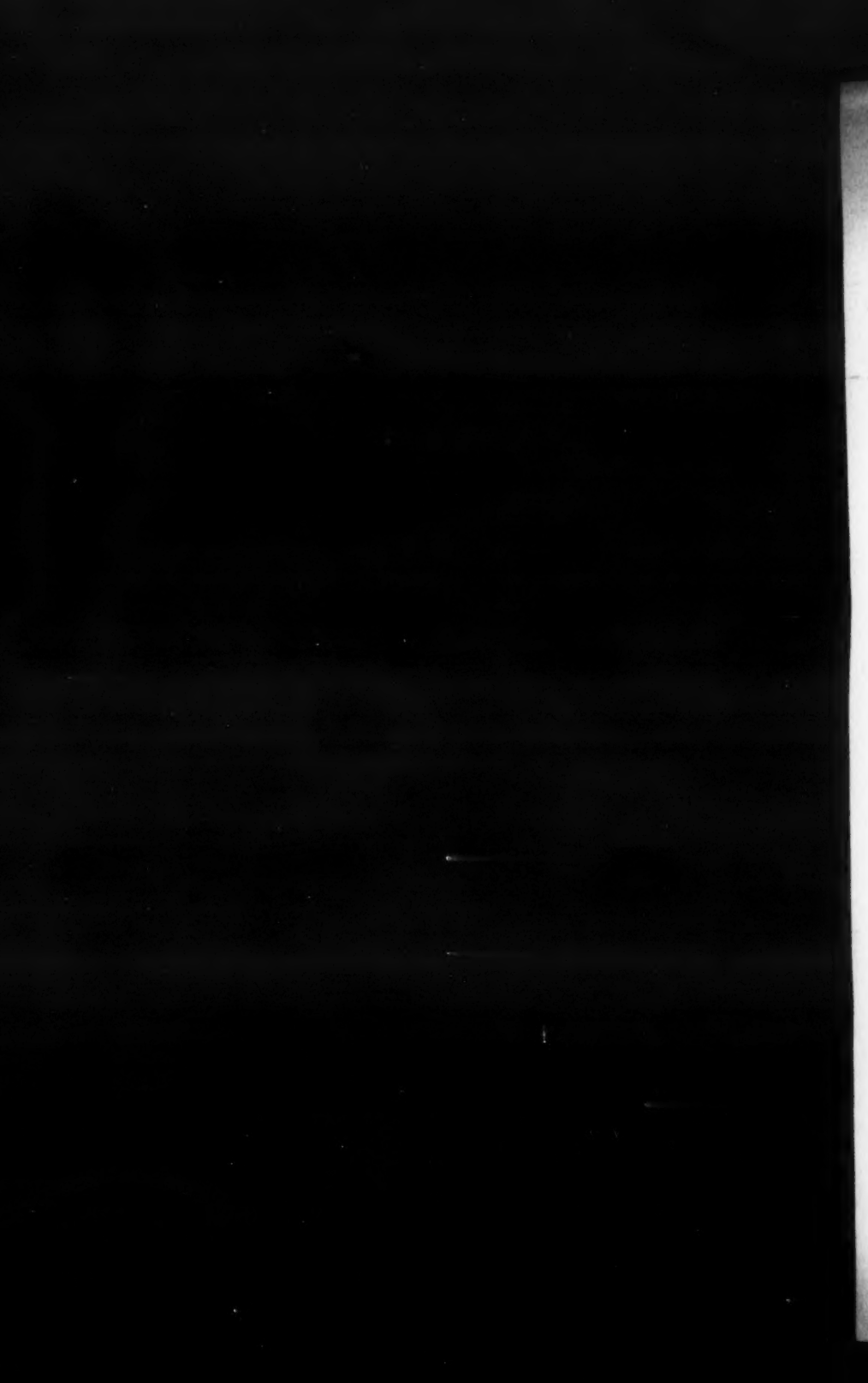
Meantime Dudley has laid his heart at Joan's feet and she has happily, though rather reluctantly, accepted it.

JOAN: Queer, isn't it—how the most important things hang on trifles? Before I came down here I had an invitation to go to Syracuse, and as I couldn't make up my mind which to accept, I tossed a coin. Heads, Westmount—tails, Syracuse. And it was tails.

DUDLEY: And yet you came to Westmount. Predestination, you see. But it was very reckless of you to gamble with your future on the toss of a coin. I always said you weren't meant for a professional woman.

JOAN: Oh, but I am!

DUDLEY: After we're married, you'll give up your profession, of course. In fact, I'd rather you gave it up now—at once.



JOAN: Oh, I can't! I'm working on a very critical case which I must finish. Don't ask me, please! My profession is as serious to me as yours is to you. (*Goes upstairs for a wrap just as HOWARD enters.*)

HOWARD: You remember the other night, Townsend, I spoke to you about a personal case. Well, I want a divorce.

DUDLEY (*surprised*): I thought you and Mrs. Mowbray were—

HOWARD: Well, we're not. On what grounds can you—

DUDLEY: Well, that depends. Some States, desertion—some States, incompatibility—and I think in Texas they have what they call psychic cruelty.

HOWARD: That's good enough for me. So get busy on it, Townsend.

DUDLEY (*hesitatingly*): Well, it's a very serious thing, Mr. Mowbray, and I'd—

HOWARD: You'll take this case, or you'll not handle any of my business.

DUDLEY: I'll take the case, of course, Mr. Mowbray, but it's only fair to tell you that my heart—

HOWARD: Hang your heart! Use your head! Can I count on you, or not?

DUDLEY: Well, I've given you my word. You may be sure I'll go through with it.

HOWARD: That's all I want. Drop all my other business and go on with the case. I've stood it as long as I'm going to, Townsend; I'm through! (*Exits.*)

Joan, coming downstairs, hears enough of this conversation to arouse her fears. She begs Dudley not to take the case.

DUDLEY: But his mind is quite made up, Joan. And she'll be happier. Some one has to take the case. And it's my profession, after all.

JOAN: She's given him some of the best years of her life, and now he wants to get rid of her—and you help him!

DUDLEY: But you take the sentimental view. I couldn't give up the case now if I wanted to. I've agreed to take it.

JOAN: You think, then, your client is right in this matter? And if you were in his position, you would do the same?

DUDLEY: Y—yes. I think I should.

JOAN: I'm disappointed in you, Dudley. Now that I know your views on such things, I'd think twice before I'd marry you.

DUDLEY: Joan—I love you—you don't mean that— Why, it isn't a question of approval—it's a question of professional duty! Now, we won't talk about it any more.

JOAN: All right, then, we won't. But

you'll never win the case. I won't let you. I'm working on it, too.

DUDLEY: *You?* How? What on earth has it got to do with you?

JOAN: You think you know all about me. Well, you don't. I'm not an old friend of Mrs. Mowbray's at all. I'm here professionally to advise her, to bring those two together, to start them off happily all over again. I don't know anything about people's bones, but I know a lot about the inside of hearts and homes. That's my specialty—patching up unhappy homes. And in spite of Mowbray, and in spite of you, I'm not going to see a woman, whose only fault is to love too much, get the worst of it.

DUDLEY: What can you do? You can't oppose a man like Mowbray.

JOAN: Yes, I can. Put your two wise heads together. I'll be ready for you. *You're* working to separate them, and *I'm* working to bring them together.

DUDLEY: Oh, Joan, don't let it be you against me!

JOAN: Well, it is. And I can tell you right now who is going to win. So if you'll excuse me, I'll get to work. Good night.

The following week Joan and her secretary, Harriet, are exceptionally busy in the office of her New York apartment. An extract from the *Weekly*, just out, explains her conduct of the Mowbray case.

JOAN: They didn't leave out anything, did they, Harriet? Read it.

HARRIET (*reading*): "We talk of the pranks of the fair ladies of our Manhattan Isle, but they are as nothing when a young suburban wife kicks over the traces. A week ago peace reigned supreme in the Mowbray family. The well-known capitalist could always go home, and the faithful wife would be there, home-loving and submissive. Then suddenly something snapped. Qualities hitherto unknown broke out in her, and shaped themselves into a suite at the Ritz, a continuous round of champagne suppers, and a Russian prince. The little gingham gown hangs in the closet at home, and has been replaced by a 'oo-lala.' As we gazed at her in the box—the devoted prince ever by her side—we wondered, 'Why did husband look elsewhere?' But good-by, suburban life. It's wife's turn now to hit the high spots."

JOAN: It always works. A man is just like a dog with a bone. He may not want it himself, but he doesn't want any one else to have it. (*CATHERINE enters. She is smartly and expensively dressed.*)

CATHERINE: Oh, Joan, I couldn't get here

any sooner. I just have to sleep some time, you know. I don't like this business of turning night into day.

JOAN: What time did the party break up?

CATHERINE: I don't know. Oh, that fool prince! Can't you tell him I'm not that kind? Or, for Heaven's sake, let me wear long sleeves! I'd just as soon have a mouse nibbling me. Oh, doctor, I'm so homesick!

JOAN: Cheer up. *Alice is seasick* by this time. She sailed this morning for Europe.

CATHERINE: Good! But it's Howard's silence that worries me now. Every time there's a knock at the door, or a strange man looks at me on the street, I imagine it's some one coming to divorce me. (*Wiping her eyes*) And to-day is our wedding anniversary!

JOAN: Well, thank Heaven, you're not there to remind him of it. I have a plan. You're going home to-day. But not as the Catherine he knew. That Catherine couldn't hold him. But as some one he doesn't know—gay, frivolous, happy-go-lucky. You've had a prince at your feet, and you'll never be satisfied with the old life again. You've come home to-day to give him his freedom.

CATHERINE: But supposing he takes it?

JOAN: Oh, he won't be nearly as anxious when he finds there's nothing holding him. Then keep on acting a little wilder all the time. Play jazz music and dance—smoke cigarettes—tell him you've had an offer to go in the chorus.

CATHERINE: All right. Supposing it works and we get him back?

JOAN: Ah, there's the danger! If you make it too easy for him, you'll lose him again. Now, if he should melt the least bit, hurry right back to New York. You can't take any chances.

CATHERINE: Oh, doctor, I won't make it too easy for him. I've had my lesson. (*Boxes of hats and gowns for Mrs. Mowbray arrive. JOAN and HARRIET admire their startling effects. Then, most unexpectedly, Mr. Mowbray is announced. CATHERINE, with her new costumes, is hurried to another room with complete instructions for her reentry in a few moments.*)

JOAN: How do you do, Mr. Mowbray? It's so good of you to come to see me.

HOWARD (*coldly*): Pardon me, Doctor Deering, but this is not a social call. There's no use beating about the bush. Where is my wife? For a whole week I've waited for her to come back.

JOAN: And you think—

HOWARD: I don't think. I know! You're responsible for this, Doctor Deering. It was you who advised Mrs. Mowbray to go away.

As this matter has to be settled at once, I took the liberty of sending for my lawyer to meet me here. He's due any moment.

JOAN (*taken aback*): Your lawyer—oh, Mr. Townsend—

HOWARD: This is a very serious business, Doctor Deering—breaking up a man's home.

JOAN: I broke up your home! But you don't understand.

HOWARD (*producing a copy of the "Weekly"*): How dare they publish such stuff! It's a damned piece of— What right had you to come into my house and put Mrs. Mowbray up to such things? (*And then DUDLEY TOWNSEND enters. He moves confidentially toward JOAN, but she freezes him with a glance.*) Where have you been, Townsend? I've been trying to get you for two days.

DUDLEY (*producing legal document*): I've been working on your case. Now, there are two kinds of divorce. (*HOWARD tries to interrupt.*) Excuse me, Mr. Mowbray. In the first place we have divorce *a vinculo*, i. e., from the bonds or chains—in other words, an absolute divorce. Allow me, please, Mr. Mowbray. And secondly, divorce *a mensa et thoro*—that is to say, merely a separation, in which case, you understand, you don't have to live with your wife, but you are not supposed to marry again. Of course, what you want is a divorce *a vinculo*. You see, I'm pressing this case vigorously.

HOWARD: I don't want it. I've got a better case for you, Townsend. I want you to witness that Doctor Deering absolutely refuses to tell me where Mrs. Mowbray is.

DUDLEY: Well, don't you see, that makes it all the better? Desertion and—

HOWARD (*crossly*): I told you to drop that, didn't I? I want you to sue this woman for alienation of my wife's affections. (*To JOAN*) Just what is your game, Doctor Deering? I've heard of kidnapping children to claim a big reward, but—

DUDLEY: Oh, come, we're not going to gain anything by insulting Miss Deering.

HOWARD: Say, if you are my lawyer, why the devil are you siding with her?

DUDLEY: The doctor—Miss Deering—is a woman, and for no other reason than that we should at least be—

JOAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Townsend, but I can take care of myself.

DUDLEY: As far as I'm concerned, you can, then.

HOWARD: See here, Townsend, this isn't getting us anywhere.

DUDLEY: Oh, what's the use? I'm through!

HOWARD: Then let me go ahead.

JOAN: Well, at least, Mr. Mowbray, you

know what you want. And if you went after a woman and got her interested in you, and led her to believe that you were simply frantic about her, I don't believe you would walk out of the room without a word—not that she'd care—and afterward make slighting remarks and—

DUDLEY: But I went back and you had gone.

JOAN: Yes, and I'm still gone.

HOWARD: Who's gone? What are you talking about, Townsend?

DUDLEY: You can imagine my feelings when I found that you had gone.

HOWARD (*impatiently*): What's the matter with you two? What's all this about?

DUDLEY: I asked Miss Deering to marry me. We quarreled on account of this case.

HOWARD: Oh, then there was something between you two! Well, if I'd known that, I'd have engaged another lawyer. Well, you can settle your affairs between yourselves. I'm going to find my wife.

JOAN: Just a moment, Mr. Mowbray. I have a message for you from your wife. To-day is your wedding anniversary.

HOWARD: It is! It was such a perfect wedding day!

JOAN: Mrs. Mowbray wanted to give you something—just for old time's sake—and she thought what you would appreciate more than anything else in the world would be—your freedom. That's what you want, isn't it? That's what your lawyer's working for.

HOWARD: Yes, but—

JOAN: Now, don't feel any twinge of conscience. Mrs. Mowbray is having the time of her life—making up for all the lost years! You must admit she's still young and attractive—at least, other men seem to think so. And now that she's had a taste of life, she's quite another person. So you're free now to go and come as you please—not an obstacle in the way.

DUDLEY: That's all we wanted—willful desertion—divorce *a vinculo*—

HOWARD: Keep quiet, will you?

Catherine, wearing one of the new costumes—the last word in fashion—her cheeks highly rouged, enters gayly, greeting Howard and Dudley most nonchalantly. Howard is amazed and horrified at both her appearance and manner, which are all, and more, than Joan has dared to hope. She plays up splendidly, relating her adventures, her joy in her new freedom, and her offer to go

“in the chorus.” In despair, Howard turns to Dudley, then to Joan, but neither of them seems to be able to deal with the hysterically gay young wife.

HOWARD: Catherine, I have a big deal on to-morrow, and everything depends on it. But I can't do my best, with you on my mind like this. Do you know what day this is?

CATHERINE: Tuesday.

HOWARD: It's our wedding anniversary.

CATHERINE: So it is. Ten years ago to-day, at this very hour—(*Looks at her watch*)—no, no we weren't married quite yet. You were still free. Oh, what the devil's the use of dwelling on it? I've given you back your priceless freedom, old dear, and now what more do you want?

HOWARD: I want you back again, Catherine. Perhaps I haven't done what's right—perhaps I've neglected you and hurt you in many ways. I only wish we loved each other as we used to!

CATHERINE: It would be so much more interesting! (*Signal from JOAN.*) But we don't—we never can—so what's the use?

HOWARD: Yes, we can. We can begin all over again. No more quarrels—no more arguments—no more tears. (*Catching and embracing her*) I want you more than I can tell you, my darling!

CATHERINE (*breaking away*): Now, Howard, don't. You've rumpled my dress, and I have an engagement with the prince—

HOWARD: You have an engagement with me. My taxi is waiting at the door, and you're coming with me! (*Picks her up and carries her out, struggling and protesting.*)

DUDLEY (*quietly*): I congratulate you on winning the case, Doctor Deering.

JOAN (*very busy at desk*): Thank you. (*HARRIET hurries in with JOAN's hat, coat, and bag, reminding her that she has only twenty minutes to catch the train for Poughkeepsie and her next case.*)

DUDLEY: Don't go! Take my case next.

JOAN: I don't take men. Besides, American home life must be upheld.

DUDLEY: There's no better way of upholding it. When in doubt, toss a coin. Come on. Heads, you don't go—tails, you stay.

JOAN: All right—but—all right—

DUDLEY (*catching coin*): Heads. You don't go.

JOAN: It's heads—I don't go.

DUDLEY (*his arms around her, while she struggles to get away*): Lean this way. Oh, doctor, I have a pain in my heart! I don't believe it's ticking right. Listen! (*He whistles "Love, Here Is My Heart" as the curtain falls.*)



Trying to Please George

By

Katharine Haviland Taylor

Author of "Marry in Haste and Love at Leisure," "Yellow Soap," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

A Christmas story with plenty of sentiment, but quite out of the ordinary.

MARRIAGE, as every one knows, is an affair of widely differing currents, and constant adjustment to these currents is necessary for those who encounter them. It usually starts as a closely banked, boiling, turbulent little stream which, after a year or so, often separates, to run in two divergent ways. Then, it may come back, to go on in one broad, smooth, less exciting, but really much nicer and far safer stream; or else it may refuse to resume relations.

One branch may say, "You know, George, when we were first married you never let me get up to answer the telephone." The other branch may say, "Do you remember how you used to see me off in the morning? Ho hum! Those things change, don't they? Now, who's mislaid my pipe?"

If the first mentioned branch refuses to acknowledge anything sane and calming and beautiful in the larger, smoother river, she will mention the habit of newspaper reading at breakfast—oh, no, she doesn't commend it, quite the contrary! And the second branch may respond with, "Lord, Clara,"—or Imogene or Jane or Marie—"I can't seem to do anything that's right!" Which is all wrong, you know, but the way a good many people accept a state

assumed with a couple of more or less husky "I wills" and the donning of a gold ring.

This story is about two people who were part owners of one roof and who, in spite of seeming to know each other very well, knew each other very slightly and were, therefore, very unhappy. And it is scheduled for Christmas which is—I mean was—George W. Coulter's most miserable time. Bills? Surely, surely! But bills didn't make the biggest ache; it was the fact that they were George's only touch with Christmas. And at that season he became sadly aware that his wife was a good many years his junior, and that, through his insisting that she live her own fluffy, young life, they had grown apart.

George realized the high wall which loomed between them about two weeks after his marriage. He had been sure that Anne Ashley liked simple pleasures; that together they would have all sorts of good times which the socially wise would deem absurd; while in their mutual distaste of stereotyped entertainment, they would manufacture their own, and find happiness through them. He began by carting Anne off to Canada, where he had a bungalow in a densely wooded spot which bordered a

lake. Her sweetness had made him build air castles which towered over any other thoughts he had ever built—even the highest—and these made him long for solitude. He was perfectly willing for Anne to punctuate this, in fact she was to be a part of it. However, to quote George—"Anne, I want you alone! Alone, understand? Never come here that some old fool isn't around drinking tea. Yes, I know she has been kind to you; it isn't that, but I—my heaven, you're sweet!"

All of which pleased Anne, for she, too, had built some air castles. These entirely eclipsed even the most lofty that she had previously erected and they concerned solitude. That George should break in upon this was part of the plan.

"To get away from people," she thought, as she stood trying on the gray frock that would do for afternoons or smarter morning affairs, "away from people——"

She couldn't quite believe that George felt as she did about buzzing around at parties. It seemed too divine a truth to credit. She hated teas, receptions, card parties, dinners, dances. She was a little bookworm with a beautiful, deceptive shell, and she had been pushed by a mother who would have made an admirable slave driver, into appearing at every sort of entertainment at which one *should* be seen.

Her mother, who fully realized the fearful danger which threatened her daughter and the man who was to be her daughter's husband, did what she could to avert it. She began the morning that Anne was thinking of getting away from people as she tried on the gray frock.

"Anne," she said, as she elevated a lorgnette that she used heavily on all occasions, "I hope you realize your responsibilities—a little lower on the left, Celeste; the bouffant *can* be overdone—and, Anne, you have a tendency to

weight there anyway!—which will be heavy. George was attracted by your gayety, your social ease, your, shall I say——" She paused and Anne broke in.

"You mean entertaining, dear?" she asked gently. Anne was always very gentle. "If you do, I don't think that George will care if I don't do much. I'm afraid that I shall fade from the social limelight—mother, isn't this too low?"

"Not a bit—not a bit. You are no longer a child! But understand, George *thinks* he wants solitude, now—quite naturally, dear, quite naturally—but it won't last. Why, the first thing he said to me of you was that you *played* so whole-heartedly. He admires it because he can't, and I think he's marrying you because you *can*. George can do his butterflying by proxy, as does many a man in his circumstances. Too much fullness in the back, Celeste, it should have the point there."

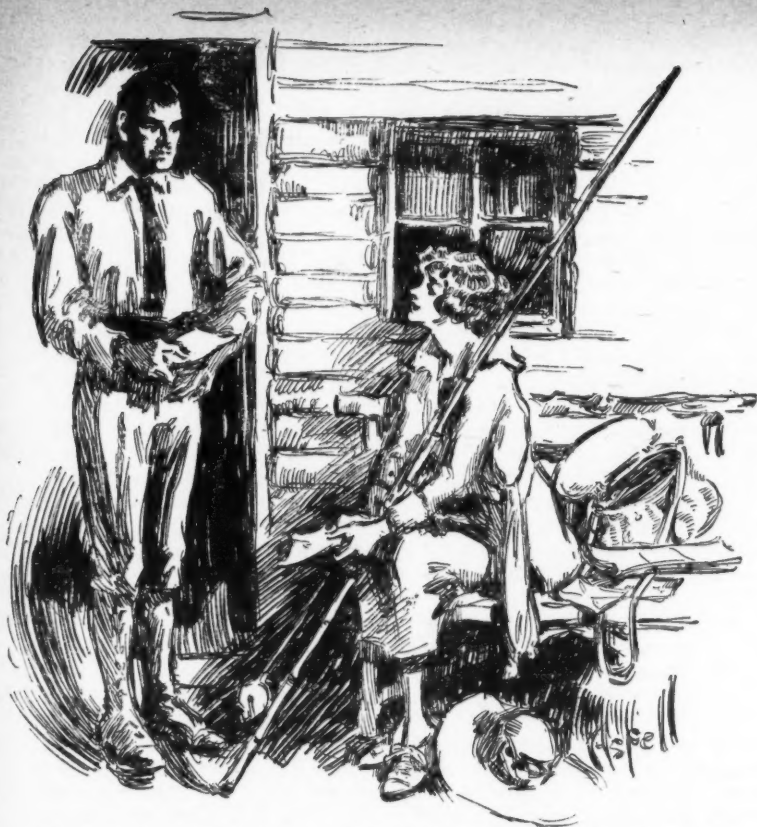
And although Anne didn't believe this, she was a little disturbed by it; and she remembered it, as her mother intended she should; and when Mrs. Ashley followed the attack by one on George, the damage began.

"Oh, I know she's young," he admitted, feeling a great deal older than his thirty-five years, "and I want her to have a good time—please believe that."

"*Insist* upon it, George! advised Anne's mother so intensely and sibilantly that it sounded as if she had been running. "Anne is so self-sacrificing; she will pretend that she doesn't want to go out—dear child!—and she should. She is but nineteen, George, which leaves a great responsibility on your shoulders."

"I know," he admitted, "and I promise I'll do everything I can to make her happy, everything!"

Then Anne came in, her eyes brightening, her cheeks flushing, as she saw him. And he forgot his doubts and re-



He wondered whether she had been wrong in thinking she would love the Canadian wilds, whether she was—bored.

remembered only her, which was entirely as it should be.

Not very long after that, George received his first letter from a recently acquired mother. He read it carelessly, but her "Anne says it is very, very quiet" clung. Tentatively he mentioned the fact that she might need diversion, to find her looking at him inquiringly—more, searchingly; she wondered whether her mother had been right, whether George did not want her to play; he, whether she had been wrong

in thinking she would love the Canadian wilds, whether she was—bored.

But he didn't speak to her frankly until two bottled days of questioning had made him so preoccupied that Anne "knew something was wrong" and, with a decided heart-sinking, hung the wrong, as does many another woman, on the wrong peg.

He managed, after he stood looking down at her for ten minutes, to decide that he would go to some hideously noisy summer colony, if she wanted it.

But he was disappointed in her failure to love that which he loved.

"She mustn't know how it disappoints me, how I hate to go," he thought as he bent above her. "She mustn't know!"

And then because she was in her first sleep, flushed from it, and very lovely with her hair spreading loosely across the pillow, he slipped down on his knees by the bed and laid his face against her arm. She stirred, and woke with that baffled look that is a part of the person who steps too quickly from sleep into a new and uncertainly fastened world.

"George," she whispered, after this expression faded and she had moored herself to her place and her life.

"Sweetheart?"

"George, would you like to go somewhere where there's more gayety?"

"Would you?" he counter-questioned, as he ran his fingers through her hair.

"I want to do what you want to do," she answered, after a little uncertain breath clutch. "I think it's nice here, but——" her eyes rested on him searchingly, as her voice dropped. He felt a question in them and he thought he knew the answer that would satisfy.

"But we both need livening up?" he finished. "Yes, perhaps we do. Suppose we go where there's a lot of music and dancing, to-morrow? I don't dance well, but there will be other men who do."

"No," she said quickly, "no, George, I don't want——"

"Why, dearest," he broke in, "I want you to have a good time. I like to see it." He kissed her quickly. "You're nineteen and I'm thirty-six," he went on, in a musing undertone; "don't think I'm going to forget it, that I'll ask the impossible!"

"I——" she began.

"You shall play," he interrupted, "and wear pretty things and be adored and admired, for that is what I want!"

And because her arms had slipped around his neck to draw his face close to hers, he didn't see the tears that filled her eyes. "Mother was right!" she thought miserably, as he promised, somewhat huskily, that she should be the gayest, prettiest small woman in all New York; and that, although he had never learned to play, he would look on and be proud of her doing it.

And that was the way it began, the divide which made Anne and George take their separate ways, and keep to them. Anne began to feel that she must please her husband, as she had pleased her mother. He demanded, or seemed to demand, the same things of her, things she disliked doing; and although she did them, she never felt entire approval from him. She would meet him at dinner, say, rather wistfully, "I went to Sue Danforth's musical to-day."

"Did you? I hope you had a good time," would be the empty reply.

Perhaps she would go on with, "We've had cards for Mrs. Tyson's dance on the eighteenth."

To which he would respond, "You'll enjoy that, won't you?" And then, without waiting for answer, continue with, "Can you go with Margaret and Ted? Doubt if I can get away—awfully busy just now—that Franklin transaction——"

A small bridge that should have carried them across all difficulties—he was George, junior, of course—only aggravated difficulties. George, senior, came to feel that the mother should give more time to their child, and then remorsefully to realize her years and her need for diversion. Urged by him she went out more, saw less of the boy who was more to her than all the world, and grew discontented, sharp, exacting.

It was nearing the time for their third Christmas together that George's restraint broke, under a torrent of suspicions. These were started by his

"What do you want for Christmas?" and her answer, "I saw a platinum pin I-like on Fifth Avenue. I thought if you wanted to give it to me, I could order it to-morrow."

He smiled disagreeably. "I can at least sign the check, can't I?" he inquired.

"What do you mean, George?"

"I mean that this whole thing's a farce." She looked at him, wondering and a little shamed. He wandered over to stand before an open fire. "We never seem to have time for anything," he went on, and more gently. "I'm a check book to you, and I will be to the boy."

"Don't you want me to go out?" she asked.

"Of course," he answered shortly. "You have your place in life to fill. I realize that. I don't know what I'm talking about, what I do want. I only know that things are wrong, *wrong!*"

"Aren't we wasting time, George?" she inquired crisply.

"I imagine we are," he agreed, his voice again unpleasant. She turned and left the room and he sat alone, and as he did he imagined all sorts of things which might seem foolish to people who have never done Christmas shopping or never trimmed trees. He pretended that Anne wasn't a giddy, young thing who had an insatiable appetite for butterfly good times, but that she, with him, loved and wanted the home variety of diversions. He imagined shopping with her and Junior, even carrying home queer-looking packages that wouldn't stay wrapped. He imagined putting up the tree themselves, instead of relegating it to Parker; he imagined getting up at an ungodly hour with Junior, who sans nurse, would not stay down; in short, he imagined the sort of Christmas that happens in a great many, happy, healthy, simple homes, where the mother has time to manufacture Christmas atmosphere.

After an hour of this he got up and started downtown. He walked toward the subway slowly, because he wanted to see the children who were pinching packages that their elders carried, to smell the greens, to feel the cheer and the happiness of the happiest time—even though he couldn't share it.

He was almost himself when he reached his office; and he might have stayed himself, if his august mother-in-law had not decided to telephone him.

"George," she began, after her greeting and his recognition of her voice, "I have the most delightful suggestion for a present for Anne. I'll pick it up, if you'll settle. One of those bags from France—one has the consciousness of helping the needy *as* one buys—and the one Anne admired. Costs seven hundred—a real bargain, George, I assure you. She said, entirely unconsciously—you know Anne—'How I would love that! And I said, 'perhaps a good, kind husband I know would like to give it to his little wife.' Was I right, George?"

He managed to answer, "Yes."

"And she said," continued Mrs. Ashley, "George is so good about money."

After he hung up the receiver he went back to sit before his desk and to neglect his work. A black mood had descended, and entertaining it took all his time. He saw himself as many other American husbands, the check signer, the bank, the necessary power which after all, amounts to so little.

"I wonder," he reflected, "what Anne would do, how Anne would feel, if I were poor?"

He thought about it a good deal. He couldn't dismiss it. It tantalized, turned him hot, then cold. His conjectures of "She'd leave me," or, "She'd stick," left him both sick and ashamed. But his muttered "What a damned cad I am to think of this," didn't quiet the question, nor end it. Its repetition became monotonous, it drummed until he



"Suppose," he heard himself say through the whirl that rising blood made, "that I tell you I can't be an inexhaustible bank any more?"

was half maddened under its din; it made him stoop.

The days before Christmas sped by as those days do; they were noisy and tiring and hurried. Anne grew nervous, spoke too quickly, grew shadows beneath her pretty eyes.

And, after all, it was she who started it, who made George stoop; and really we cannot blame her, a lady named Eve

having long ago inaugurated this fashion among females.

"George," Anne said, on the evening of December twenty-fourth, "I'm out of money again, and one has to give the delivery boys something. I'm so sorry, but it does take lots."

"Suppose," he heard himself say through the whirl that rising blood made, "that I tell you I'm out of it?"

"That I tell you I can't be an inexhaustible bank any more?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, as she drew near.

"Suppose," he said, "that you sit down and we talk—here, by me. Anne, suppose I told you—" he stopped, choked, he was ashamed, ashamed, but he couldn't stop. "Suppose," he went on, "that I tell you I'm poor; that things have gone badly, that we'll have to shut up this place, dismiss the servants; that you'll have to care for Sonny, give up your good times—"

"Oh, George!" she whispered. He turned to her, astounded. Suddenly her tears began. "I'm sorry that I'm so glad," she confided, when she could speak, "but George—"

"Anne?" He bent close to her, put a hand under her chin, raised her face to meet his.

"I am so s-sick of going places," she confided. "I only d-did it because you wanted me to. And Sonny likes Elsie better, b-because he sees her more—he does, he really does, George. And I'm so sick of ordering my own Christmas presents. I'd rather have a ninety-eight-cent vase that you'd pick out than the things I have to buy for you to give me. Perhaps you'll have more time now. If you knew how *sick* I am of being ordered off to parties; how sick I am of hearing you say, 'Run along

and have a good time, 'fraid I can't get away;' how sick I am of *everything*!"

His arms closed around her, and because he was so very much upset that he was ashamed to have even Anne see it, he hid his face against her hair, muttering the sort of things that he had not said since they hurried off to a gay spot, from the Canadian wilds.

"I wanted to trim Sonny's tree," she went on, her voice still uneven and husky from tears, "to buy things together—"

"Say we start," he suggested, "next year, practice along through this, doing things together, to get used to it. We can't this, because"—the clock struck twelve—"it is Christmas, you sweet thing. And what fools men are, you dear, dear child! Comfortable? You're tired. Shadows under your eyes. What fools men are, but what heavens angels grant to—fools! The money isn't gone—there, there, dear, it's all right—we'll act as if it were! My soul, but I love you! What made you think I wanted you to do these things? Why, I—"

He bent, kissed her passionately, held her close, breathless, wordless.

"If it wouldn't bore you terribly, she whispered, after some interval had passed, "let's go to Canada next summer. I liked the quiet so much, George—so very much! I've *dreamed* of it ever since!"



HYMN OF THE DRESSMAKER'S ASSISTANT

WHAT time has the Divinity who makes the planets whirl,
To bother with the fussy things of just a little girl?
While he puts Neptune on his course and sees how Saturn spins,
How can he trouble with the loss of thread and safety pins?
Yet He remembers in His heart and counsels me, my state;
To pity and to love the poor, to reverence the great.

CHARLES AGNEW MACLEAN.



Bollivar's Mirrors

By George F. Worts

Author of "Peter, the Brazen," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY T. VICTOR HALL

An exciting few hours they were for Henry Kiddle. How Bollivar's mirrors helped him to solve the mystery, destroy the evidence, and get the girl, makes this vivid story.

HENRY KIDDLE was sitting on his bed unlacing his shoes when a timid voice came through the door with the information that he was wanted on the telephone.

The little mahogany clock on the dresser began striking eleven as his landlady's skirts rustled down the hall; and as Henry was never called to the telephone at this hour of the night he surmised that something must have happened across the street. For it did not occur to him that the voice at the other end of the wire would belong to any one but Olive. And a few seconds later, having slipped into his bath robe and crept down the stairs, his guess was substantiated.

Her tremulous voice, hardly more than a whisper, vibrated in the receiver at his ear:

"Henry, would you mind taking a little walk—say, to the river and back?"

"Has anything happened?" he said quickly.

"You'll be waiting at Bollivar's?" she replied, as though she had not heard the question.

And Henry assured her in endearing terms that he would be waiting at Bollivar's.

He was smiling fondly when he re-entered his bedroom, and sighing. It was one of the qualities in Olive that so appealed to him—her impulsiveness, her abrupt way of deciding to do the unexpected. Here it was, after eleven o'clock—and she wanted him to take her walking!

Yet the smile went away from his lips as he commenced putting on his clothes. By training, Henry's was a questioning intelligence, accustomed to solving "Whys;" and he was at work on the theory before long that a man whom he disliked and distrusted was behind Olive's rather tardy inspiration—the person of one Joe Ostra, a mysterious and sinister man indeed. Joe Ostra was the fly in Henry's ointment; Joe Ostra had been the barrier in the path of true love.

With his thoughts struggling with the problem of this man who might still threaten his happiness, Henry finished dressing, buttoned himself into a light overcoat, picked up his felt hat in the downstairs hall, and quietly let himself out.

The night was one to disturb eerie reflections, lighted in ghostly fashion

by a moon, a fat, unwholesome moon, whose rim was corroded by the soapy film that rose up like steam from the meadows. The atmosphere was charged with marshy dampness, which crept through Henry's clothing and into his lungs, and made him shiver.

With the city man's instinctive groping for comfort and sociability, he lighted a cigarette, and stole down Purdock Avenue toward Bollivar's cut-rate drug store.

Now Purdock Avenue is one of those streets which starts out so promisingly from the upper edge of town, but allows swampy, ash-filled meadows to roll way to the rivers and leave the promise to be fulfilled another day. The neighborhood is only an appanage of the grumbling, selfish monster of a city, being situated within easy walking distance of the end of the Broadway subway line. Yet the modest neighborhood is quite as proud of its self-sufficiency as are any of the isolated villages in the adjoining counties along the Boston and Albany post roads, boasting stores to fill all wants, a movie theater with plush seats, and a landmark of distinction, an old wooden church of Gothic design, a relic of bygone rural days, about which the community has gathered.

Bollivar's cut-rate drug store stands on the corner of Purdock Avenue and Van Huysen Street, across from the old Congregational Church. Early in the neighborhood's history Bollivar's made itself righteously popular with the younger element by having the two window frames on the corner filled, not with transparent glass, but with mirrors of splendid French plate, these reflectors furnishing delights not to be confused with those derived from displays of "Oh, See Daddy Smile!" shaving cream, and other bathroom accessories.

The two adjoining mirrors were at right angles to each other, at the very

corner of the drug store, one facing Purdock Avenue, the other facing Van Huysen Street, so that in crossing either of these streets toward the corner drug store you were presented with a full-length panel of your admirable self.

Perhaps for this reason Bollivar's became in the course of time a general meeting place. And in the direction of the now darkened drug store on this ghostly evening late in October, Henry Kiddle, leaving a pungent trail of smoke hanging in the lifeless air behind him, diligently made his way.

Arrived at this trysting place, Henry gazed briefly, with the aid of a greenish street lamp, into the mirror facing Purdock Avenue. He gazed at himself with a sober air, for he believed that evil forces were at work against him, that some decision vitally affecting his future was broiling; and he hoped that Olive would to-night clear up the mystery that had been worrying him since the night he met her.

Bollivar's mirror gave forth a pale, inscrutable young man, who had been ordained by circumstance to move in a quarter where inscrutability is mingled with the very air one breathes. Henry was a "floor man" in a Wall Street house, with a good future in the stocks and bonds business ahead of him; for Henry had a "way" with people—he was persuasive, crafty, intelligent. And he was a type—a slimly built youngster, narrow in the hips, wiry in the shoulders, pale of skin, with gray eyes, calculating and yet warm. The gamblers of Wall Street are condemned frequently as a heartless lot, yet any man who can laugh or sob unrestrainedly at the appearance of a little group of initials and numerals on a strip of unreeing white ribbon surely cannot be devoid of feeling.

Be that as it may, certain phases of Henry's campaign for the heart of Olive Spillane were as calculating as

calculating can be; and others were warm and tender. That he loved her was not to be questioned. Olive had qualities he had always hoped to find present in the girl he married—distinctive beauty, charm, understanding, a delicious sense of humor. Olive was warmly affectionate when she wanted to be, and at other times curiously cold and unresponsive. Indeed, it was impossible for Henry to say just why he loved her—she seemed to be the completing part of his existence.

He remembered distinctly his first startling glimpse of her, at this corner, an indirect glimpse afforded by the very mirror into which he had been staring so soberly. Late on the evening of his arrival on Purdock Avenue, an evening of the previous spring, he was standing on the sidewalk idly adjusting his necktie, when, out from the darkness of the avenue and into the unfathomable depths of the mirror, there had floated a dim face, a pair of red lips, and a pair of alluring dark eyes.

The abruptness of her appearance from the depths of the looking-glass had caused Henry to start, while the hands at his necktie had slowly gone down to a normal position. When he turned his head the little beauty had passed, but the image of her smile had lingered—a scampering ghost of—scorn?

That it might have been a scornful smile, for she had caught Henry in a most immodest gesture, that of adjusting his tie before a public looking-glass, only hardened the young man's resolution. She was the prettiest girl he had seen all evening; and the truth of the matter was, that Henry had been looking them all over quite carefully.

He admired her from afar for a week of lonesome evenings, until he produced a mu-

tual friend to perform the necessary function, although Henry believed that Olive, too, had gazed from afar not with disfavor.

The first time Henry walked home with Olive from the Filmart Theater, where the mutual friend had given him the right, he was angered at finding a stranger a few years older than himself, dressed smartly, and seemingly



"Henry," she began in a breathless voice, "do you love me enough to marry me?"

making an impression on the bald-headed, stoop-shouldered, red-faced old gentleman who proved to be the little beauty's father.

Henry might not have felt so bitter over it if his introduction to Olive Spillane had not been the outcome of evenings of strategy, or if Joe Ostra had not revealed his personal feelings in the matter so pointedly. His attitude toward Henry conceived in that meeting was one of scornful tolerance and worldly superiority.

Ostra was "a private detective, the owner of oily, curly, yellow hair, reddened eyes deeply pocketed, and a mouth that dipped malevolently at the corners—a handsome man in a coarse way. He lived in a small, furnished apartment down Van Huysen Street.

How Henry had hated him!

But Henry smiled forgivingly now, as he recalled that and following evenings; for he had set out to conduct a whirlwind courtship, aiming to occupy so much of Olive's time that Ostra was left with the meager alternative of winning her favor through her father's. Henry's methods were direct; he did not believe in making love to a girl through her father.

Coming into the apartment after the movies on a subsequent evening, he had been amused to discover the private detective and old man Spillane in an argument, with heads together and faces red with emotion. The conversation had stopped abruptly when Henry and Olive entered.

And in the living room, where they had retired, leaving the two debaters in the dining room with a closed door between, Henry had lightly questioned her. He didn't want to appear inquisitive; he had told her laughingly; but what *was* going on between her father and that—"elegant detective?"

Olive was demurely evasive. He had been discoursing poetically on a somewhat different theme over their sundaes

in the Kandy Kitchen, and he suspected that she was not entirely disinterested, although she had pretended to be, perhaps to lend interest to proceedings, threatening otherwise to be cut and dried.

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Olive. "Well, why did they jump apart like that when we blew in?" Henry persisted, with a group of intense little lines gathering between his gray eyes. Half in fun and half in earnest he went on: "What is that bird doing up here all the time, anyway?"

To that Olive answered chillingly: "I really cannot answer that question, Henry."

Henry delighted in these tactics of hers, purely and forgivably feminine as he knew them to be, although he had suffered moments of doubt for a while. He told her he couldn't see for the life of him what she could find to like in such a fellow. And Olive, profiting by these signs of his insecurity, continued to employ her tactics to make the excitement last.

To his eager proclamation that he was saving money rapidly, and would be given a substantial rise to the first of the year, she innocently commented that Joe was making so much money he didn't know what to do with it all. Henry knew this to be approximately true; knew that Joe's business was prospering—a business that dealt principally in unsavory divorce cases. Joe was riding around in a luridly red, second-hand roadster of the bear-cat type, sporting genuine diamonds at cuffs and cravats, even playing the market occasionally.

That Olive was candidly considering his merits and those of his enemy from a strictly material point of view, as she seemed to be doing, did not strike Henry as at all unnatural; for he thought in terms of money all day long and dreamed in those terms every night.

And Henry, despite the necessity of

this late appointment, despite the influence that the private detective was bringing to bear, still believed that old man Spillane did not dislike him. In fact, by every visible indication, the old gentleman seemed fond of Henry, and enjoyed listening to his crafty business and political arguments, his Wall Street chatter. It was a distinct pleasure for Henry to observe that Olive's father did not take such an attitude toward the yellow-haired interloper. When all four of them were in the room together, old man Spillane would generally sit 'way off in one corner by himself and stare at Joe moodily, speaking only when addressed, simply sitting there and staring, as if brooding. This often bothered Henry; something was going on between these two that he did not know about.

During his sly and ruthless campaign of seclusiveness Joe had not been idle by any means. Frequently, when he got there before Henry did, he took Olive out riding in his bear cat, a noisy brute; and Olive returned from those airings with a set expression about her pretty lips and determination shining hard in her lovely eyes. Henry's anxiety at that time was short lived; he soon deduced that the detective was making very slow progress indeed.

One development that caught Henry's attention as time wore on, however, was the increasing warmth of the mysterious arguments indulged in by Joe and the old man. All his efforts to find out their cause from Olive were fruitless; and she permitted him to believe that the two men were quarreling over the League of Nations and similar dry topics of the day. By this time she had given Henry an inkling of her real feelings toward him; but his curiosity did not wane. He sensed mystery in the little apartment—mystery that did not bode well for him somehow.

Earlier that evening, when he had tried to reach Olive by telephone, Joe

had answered; and the receiver had been hung up smartly in Henry's ear. That indicated a clash, a crisis—Joe had asserted himself at last. But Henry's feelings were unruffled. He had defeated Joe, and defeated him fairly. But he could not help wondering. He hoped that Olive would explain, for every line of reasoning he followed led only into a cul-de-sac.

A few minutes later he beheld a slim, familiar figure, clothed darkly, her countenance a dab of whiteness above black fox furs. She moved out of the apartment doorway across the street—the fourth building from the corner.

She swung a large, black muff gracefully as she strode, and Henry saw at once that she was agitated.

"Wait till I catch my breath," she panted. "Take my arm, Henry."

Henry smuggled his arm under her elbow and inserted his hand in her muff, where he acquired her cold little hands. Olive was trembling. It was evident that she must have undergone some trying scene, that she was still preyed upon by panicky emotion. She seemed to lean on him to-night, and for a while, as they walked toward the river, she stared at him peculiarly. He had never known her to be so serious.

"Henry," she began finally in a breathless voice, "do you love me enough to marry me?"

"Do I?" Henry gasped.

"Now?"

"Why, Olive!"

"To-night or to-morrow?"

"This minute! Why?"

"How much," she rushed on in the same agitated manner, "will you make next year?"

"Around four thousand," Henry stated promptly.

"How much have you saved?"

"There's nearly eleven hundred in the sinking fund, drawing four per cent," he told her.



The conversation had stopped abruptly when Henry and Olive entered.

"Well," she said with a great sigh, "I'm simply inviting you—to elope with me, Harry!"

"Wa-a-a-it a m-i-n-n-i-t," Henry begged, beginning to breathe rapidly. "Is dad going to object as strenuously as all that?"

"Dad!" the girl cried bitterly, in her agitation digging her finger nails deep into the palm of his captured hand. "Dad has put his foot down on you *forever!* We had it out to-night. Joe and dad are still at it. But dad has given in——"

"Why?" Henry put in crisply.

"Honey, I don't know what it means. But he is under some obligation to

him—they used to be such good friends, too. Henry! Dad says I must give you up! And marry—Joe! I mustn't see you any more. They only let me come out to—to break it to you."

Now Henry's anger was under control; he had smelled the rat long ago. But he let out a puff of cigarette smoke and proclaimed excitedly:

"I suspected so! I knew that cheap detective was working on him somehow! By George, Olive, I won't stand for it! This isn't China or Germany! You're living in a free country. You can marry whom you please!" Henry was trembling, too, and his voice was growing hoarse.

"Don't we love each other? Aren't we perfectly suited to each other? Won't we be happy together? It's rotten. It is! Your dad knows I'm straight and decent and honest. He knows I'm making good."

Henry stopped; his emotion was choking him. And Olive was silently weeping on his shoulder.

"Y-yes, he d-does," she whimpered. "That's the tragedy of it, honey. He does like you. I—I think that beast must have hypnotized him, Harry. They—they know I don't want anybody but you. We'll have to run away!"

"I hate to have it happen like that," Henry murmured after a little silence,

selecting his words thoughtfully. "You're the only one your dad has in the world. We ought to—to think of him, dear, if we can. It—why, it might kill him! And he might never let you come back. And some day you—might be sorry. He'll—he'll leave all his money to us—to you, I mean—and it would be a shame——"

"But you'll be rich, Harry, in a few years," she reminded him. "And we can't wait. How can we?"

"Mean to say they set a date?" Henry panted.

"Next week!"

Henry stated grimly: "We'll get married to-morrow afternoon right after the stock market closes. Olive, I'm sorry for your father, but he has brought it on himself. We'll have to—live in some hotel for a while, until we can find an apartment. You know how scarce they are."

"Yes, Harry," Olive replied meekly.

And in the light of the sickly moon Henry stopped her and kissed her very tenderly, for he had never loved her as he loved her this moment, and he had never experienced this exalted feeling of protectiveness.

They walked to the edge of the Hudson and gazed at the lonesome lights on the Palisades and at the unhurrying dark water which gleamed dimly now and then under the influence of that filmy, fat, unwholesome moon. They clung together in the mumbling silence, their thoughts becoming feelings, too tumultuous for expression, as though they had been babes in a wood. Rather, Olive clung to Henry, and he likened himself to an oak; for he now realized very clearly the importance and dignity of his position.

As they turned away from the broad and windless river, he pledged himself solemnly to make her the happiest girl in the world, to protect her forever, and in other ways to make up the loss of her poor, weak father.

8

They were a block away from Purdock Avenue, on the shadowed side of Van Huysen Street, when a startling incident occurred. A taxicab skittered past them, and in the clattering confusion of its flight over the hard-packed dirt, Henry was sure he heard a sharp explosion, the report of a firearm, the instant the cab crashed by Bolivar's. Olive believed she had heard it, too; but they decided that the sound was probably nothing but an explosion of gas in the taxi's muffler, or a blow-out perhaps, which the reckless driver was in too great a hurry to stop and repair.

"What do you suppose a taxi is doing out here at this time of night, in such a mad rush?" Henry wondered.

Olive's rejoinder was withheld and immediately forgotten; for around the corner at Bolivar's a drunken man came lurching toward them.

He was muttering obscenely to himself. In her dismay, Olive clung to her protector's arm and squeezed the hand in her muff until the intoxicated man stumbled past, seemingly unaware of their presence. That side of the street was so dark they could only make out his figure when it slithered past. But when he staggered out into the moonlit road his identity was unquestionable.

"It's Joe—with a skinful!" Henry exclaimed, when the man in the tan suit and the broad-brimmed black hat had gone on.

"But he wasn't drunk when I left the apartment an hour ago," Olive cried. "He'd been drinking, but——"

"He's tight enough now," Henry assured her cheerfully.

Olive was trembling when they turned the corner past Bolivar's popular mirrors and crossed the street diagonally to the apartment house.

At the dimly lighted entrance Henry kissed her a lingering good night, and returned to his furnished room across the way. It was their last night on Purdock Avenue!

As a result of the exhausting evening, Henry overslept. And as a result of his lateness in rising, he turned the corner around Bolivar's on his way to the subway in such haste that he neglected to give his attire its customary morning glance of approval.

All that morning Henry went about his tasks a little more energetically than usual, although he did make the mistake of buying Steel Common for a "telephone customer," instead of selling short, as the customer instructed him to do; and he could not keep his eyes off the clock.

At twelve Henry went out for lunch—his usual hour. At twelve-thirty, when Henry returned, his face was deathly white. His lips, clinging wetly together, trembled at the corners, as though he were enabled to control himself only through heroic effort on the part of his will. He fairly staggered to a chair in a corner near the blackboard.

Yet any one who had had time to pay his condition any attention would only have railed at him, for the cryptic story spun by the ticket tape often sent stronger men than Henry into conditions far more noticeable.

With no inquisitive eyes to annoy him, he crouched in the chair and eagerly reread the item in the noon edition of the newspaper he had bought on his way back to the office. It had seemed to leap out at him from the front page while he was coming up in the elevator.

The paper said that Joe Ostra was dead.

His body had been found that morning by schoolboys crossing a vacant lot, and had been called to the attention of a policeman. He had been shot through the stomach; and there was but one theory: Some, or one, of Joe Ostra's activities had been properly avenged. That was the size of it.

Suspicious as he had been, it was a

brutal surprise to Henry, to be told by the cold, undefinable lines of newsprint that Joe Ostra had been a blackmailer. *A blackmailer!* The police had had their eyes on him for a long while; if he had not been killed he certainly would have been arrested. The paper unflinchingly said that, too.

The single theory advanced by the detectives who had been assigned to the case was that Ostra had been shot by a gunman, one of the many with whom he had associated in years gone by, when he had turned, as the newspaper now revealed, from the clumsy profession of the stick-up man to the safer and more profitable calling of private detective."

"Blackmailer Shot by Gunman," the headline unqualifiedly stated. The suspected gunman's name was not mentioned. Evidently Joe had known dozens of gunmen. It proved to Henry how ignorant the people in a large city can be of their neighbors' pasts.

The detectives seemed indifferent whether the lone clew led anywhere or not, judging by the spirit with which their statements had been made to the reporter. At midnight, they said, several people in the neighborhood had heard a taxicab rattling at breakneck speed down Van Huysen Street toward Broadway; and many claimed to have heard the shot fired as the cab passed the open lot, three blocks away from Purdock Avenue, where the body was found. The police actually seemed relieved to know that the man was dead; the taxicab gunman had saved the State a great deal of expense.

Henry sat in the chair until the tip of his tongue was suddenly covered with a layer of dusty tobacco grains, wondering what misdeed Ostra had discovered in old man Spillane's past—for he was sure that a nasty attempt at blackmail explained the mystery in the little apartment; but the unknown misdeed did not trouble Henry very long.

His love for Olive was a sublime thing, far too grand to be affected by the questionable past of her unfortunate father.

As soon as Henry could compose himself, he entered a private telephone booth, closed the door after him, and called the Spillane's apartment.

His call was answered by Olive herself. Her voice was hysterical. She had just heard the news, and would have called him up within five minutes.

"Dad almost collapsed. He's in bed now. Doctor Willis left a moment ago. It must have been a dreadful shock." She lowered her voice to a whisper: "Henry, I really think he—he liked that man!"

"Shall I come up?" Henry inquired tenderly. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Oh, please do, Harry. I think dad would like to talk to you. You're so—comforting, you know."

"I'll be right up, dear," Henry replied briskly.

He was really tremendously relieved. He was not a hypocrite, he told himself, and the death of Joe Ostra simplified matters beautifully. It would not be necessary now for him and Olive to be married secretly, thereby probably incurring the everlasting disapproval of her father.

It was in a benevolent mood that Henry emerged from the last station on the Broadway subway line and made his way across lots until he came to the one where the body had been found. He intended to satisfy his natural curiosity, then go directly to Olive and her father.



With a laugh Henry pushed an elbow through the mirror adjoining the doorway.

Street arabs and elders no less morbidly curious were inspecting the scene of the death agony, where stains showed darkly in the caked mud. There was a spot or two of dried blood in the dirt of Van Huysen Street as well, where the gunman's bullet was believed to have found its billet.

Henry heard a stranger say that the fly cops had already given up the case in the belief that the taxicab could not be traced. And as Henry heard this rumor, he decided that the information he might give the police would better

be withheld. His own observation contradicted the taxicab theory anyway; for at no time during the taxi's flight had he seen the explosive red flash of a firearm.

Henry made the discovery, as he approached the corner drug store, that his supply of cigarettes was almost exhausted—only four were left in the package. But he did not go into Bolivar's immediately. For, as he started to open the door, he saw near his feet on the sidewalk a sprinkling of glass chips and splinters. He glanced at the mirror.

It was punctured. Almost in the center of it was a round black hole surrounded by a cobweb design of shining cracks, with great spearlike cracks radiating out from the hole to all four sides. The hole was about an inch in diameter.

To peek into the hole it was necessary for him to crouch down, and his exploring eye, as he conducted this innocent investigation, was at once attracted by a perfectly round spot of light presumably in the Purdock Avenue mirror, which joined at right angles the one through which he was staring. Bright cracks radiated from it like the rays of a setting sun, indicating that *both* mirrors had been punctured.

Henry stood up, frowning and moved around the corner. He was surprised at the perfect roundness of the hole. It was slightly larger than a lead pencil. By standing away from the corner where the mirrors met, he was enabled to discover that the large hole was slightly lower than the smaller one.

Rather nervously Henry lighted a cigarette and waited for a group of men to pass. Disconnected notions came together in his brain and formed a theory. Henry's theory was that the gunman had crept behind Joe Ostra when the latter was about to turn the corner past Bolivar's on his way home from the Spillane apartment; that the bullet, after passing cleanly through Joe, had

gone in one mirror and out the other, and was now no doubt buried in the dirt of Van Huysen Street; and that the murderer had then made his getaway—had hidden in the alley behind Bolivar's, perhaps—an instant before he and Olive came around the corner. This accounted for Joe's seeming intoxication. He had staggered to the lot three blocks away, and died there.

Acting upon impulse, Henry again stooped and looked curiously through the two holes, following a hasty glance up and down Van Huysen Street. Henry looked from the larger hole to the pencil-sized hole, and beyond; and it was as though he were gazing through a telescope at a scene indescribably terrible.

Indeed, what Henry beheld through those aligned holes was a vision that instantly nauseated him. He beheld himself on a witness stand in a crowded courtroom. On the witness bench he saw the pale, haggard countenance of the girl he had hoped this afternoon to marry. While in the prisoner's chair he distinctly saw the red face, the bald head, and the stooped shoulders of his prospective father-in-law.

For the aligned bullet holes in Bolivar's mirrors were aimed as truly as ever a bead was drawn at the sitting-room window of the Spillane's apartment.

With a groan Henry leaned against the sharp metal corner where the damning mirrors met. The cigarette pasted to his quivering lip expired and became moist down its entire length. But gradually his feeling of nausea left him; gradually a pink color flowed into Henry's cheeks.

Under admirable control he went into the drug store.

"Doc" Bolivar, a white-haired old man with the rosy cheeks of a boy, locally distinguished for the gentleness of his humor, greeted Henry excitedly.

"Heard about Joe Ostra?"

"Yes," said Henry faintly.

"Well! I guess it must have been a stiff jolt to old man Spillane. Joe and the old man were just like pals," the druggist babbled. "Just like pals! I guess Joe used to run up and talk over his business with him most every evening. Wise old boy, Jack Spillane; but even *he* didn't see through that rogue. Olive was in a while ago to have a prescription filled for him. Said the shock made him so sick he had to go to bed."

Henry shook his head sadly. "Who broke your mirrors?"

The druggist snorted. "These damn kids round here ought to be horse-whipped! Last week they threw stones through the wop's, and the week before they busted into the Kandy Kitchen. Why don't this neighborhood petition for another cop? It's getting to be too big a beat for one man."

"I hear the bulls have been called off the murder case," Henry said idly.

Doc Bollivar shook his head. "I don't think so. They went downtown for something. They're coming back again."

"Here?" Henry said wildly.

The druggist attended him curiously. "Yep. They're going to do a little more looking around. Seems *somebody* heard a shot when the taxi went past this corner; but there don't seem to be any blood anywhere."

"When are they coming back?"

"I don't know. Pretty soon, I suppose."

"Listen," Henry said recklessly, "are—are they going to help find those kids who busted your mirrors?"

Doc Bollivar snorted. "What gave you that idea?"

Sweat came out coldly on Henry's forehead. Carelessly he said: "Oh, I suppose they were insured, anyhow."

"Oh, sure."

Henry grinned—and it was a ghastly

grin. "Doc!" he cried. "Why not bust 'em in and do a clean job of it? I never busted a mirror in my life!"

And without loitering for discouragement of this boyish whim, he dashed to the door, opened it, and slammed it after him.

He glanced up Van Huysen Street toward the subway. Two men were approaching leisurely. They were two blocks away.

With a laugh Henry pushed an elbow through the mirror adjoining the doorway, and a shower of silvery javelins crashed to the sidewalk. He hastened to the other panel and jammed his elbow through that one, thereby destroying a chain of most amazing circumstantial evidence.

Doc Bollivar caught him by the arm and stared at him.

"You young idiot!" he panted. "You crazy?"

"Well," Henry replied mirthfully, "I just had to do it, doc. And—they were insured, weren't they? And you couldn't have fixed them, anyway, could you?"

He started away, leaving the druggist glaring after him, trying his best to understand why youth is given to such aimless displays of deviltry. And Henry Kiddle was generally such a quiet, nice-mannered young fellow, too.

As Henry crossed the street and approached the apartment house his legs were steady. He neither winced nor shuddered as he approached. Indeed, if Olive's lovely face had appeared between the pink cretonne curtains at the window he would have smiled and gayly waved his hand.

For somewhere in Henry's heart the belief had taken root that he would not be called upon to employ backmail in convincing old man Spillane of the justice of his demands.



“Baby Blue-Eyes” (No. 2)

By Arthur Tuckerman

Author of “The Silver Lady,” “The Kid Pilot,” etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

If the adorable ingénue hadn't been so untrue to form, the stage career of this young University Thespian might have been very different. One of those serious affairs that is amusing.

HOPELESS. The verdict was unanimous among the learned and bespectacled members of the faculty that dwelt behind the gray, ivy-clad walls of Eastern University after a cursory glance at the examination papers of one Theodore Hall, freshman.

Hopeless. An identical verdict was promptly reached by the leading exponents of football and basketball, after each had permitted Theodore a brief but awful demonstration of his prowess at their respective sports. By the end of his first term even Theodore—whom nobody ever accused of hating himself—had to admit that his college career gave no indication of being dazzling.

The very fact of this unpromising start probably accentuated all the more his enjoyment of that halo of fame which suddenly crowned him in his junior year, when he astonished every one by developing a remarkable talent for acting. He began out of pure chance with a ten-line part in some obscure frat concert to oblige some friends, and ended up scarcely two months later cast for the leading rôle in the annual university show. In Brownsville, the town adjacent to Eastern, his acting attracted capacity houses,

and when the show traveled to New York for its conventional three-night run it had to stay twice that time to satisfy popular demand.

Both faculty and students exhibited a marked change of attitude toward him; on the campus groups of freshmen paused to stare admiringly after him. All of which is as it should be. Your modern university tends to encourage varied talent; it cannot be accused of bigotry. If a man reflects glory upon his alma mater she will worship him, caring not whether he accomplishes it by writing sonnets, making three-base hits, or playing a saxophone.

After his name had grown to six-inch letters on the college billboards it was perhaps but natural that Theodore began to devote much of his time to things theatrical. It became his custom to attend at least one performance of each of the traveling shows that came to the Brownsville Opera House twice a week. His opinion of a play was regarded as worth having, so much so that even the local Alan Dales buttonholed him after the performances before they began their write-ups for those local clarions of truth and mouthpieces of the public, the *News-Letter*

(Democrat) and the *Eagle* (Independent Republican).

Thus Theodore began to tread the primrose path. For a year life patted him upon the back with a kindly hand, until two weeks before Commencement Day in his junior year, when "Baby Blue Eyes" (No. 2 Company) hit Brownsville for a two-night stand and immediately upset the whole of his universe with the consummate ease that blue eyes sometimes accomplish such things.

Accompanied by half a dozen of his most favored intimates, Theodore went in black-and-white splendor to witness "Baby Blue Eyes" from the first row of the Opera House. As a typical musical farce, served out with a sprinkling of shapely blondes and brunettes, it failed to shine much above its kind; but the leading lady—who called herself Irma Snow—had canary-colored hair, cerulean blue eyes, and played the part of a fascinating ingénue with one-hundred-per-cent ingenuousness. The combination was too much for Theodore. In a word, he fell. And because it was the first time he had fallen he came down with a mighty crash.

During the intermission he summoned up enough courage to "send around" a politely worded note inviting Irma to sup in Eastern's best style. It came back promptly, opened but unanswered!

Theodore was both puzzled and piqued. He slipped the card furtively into his pocket, careful that none of his admiring satellites should see it. That the star of a number-two traveling company should refuse the invitation of Theodore Hall, the famed Thespian of Eastern University, was not only ridiculous—it was unbelievable. He saw the remainder of the show and his fate was sealed. The next day he went about the campus raving shamelessly over Irma. The esteem in which his satellites had held him dropped with

the rapidity of a motor stock. He attended the remaining two performances of "Baby Blue Eyes" in Brownsville. On Thursday the show left for Albany.

In order to keep track of the new light in his life Theodore began to buy every theatrical paper published. "Baby Blue Eyes" (No. 2) moved so quickly that he reverted to wartime practices and pinned a large map of the Eastern States on the wall of his room, following Irma's line of march with a tiny flag. By Commencement Day she had reached Utica and was entrenched there for a three-day engagement.

Theodore tried to banish her from his mind; but she could not be banished. He took his troubles to his roommate, Reggie Tresk, a lovable, studious soul, one of those people one hunts out in the hour of need and forgets at other times. Reggie was a psychologist—or thought he was. He had a habit of ascribing everything to psychology; he read every book he could find on the subject, and even wrote one himself, which was not published.

"I'm crazy about that girl," groaned Theodore. "What can a fellow do, Reggie, to show her how he feels? I sent her a note every night she was here, but she paid no attention to me at all."

Reggie sucked his pipe and considered the problem gravely.

"I should think," he said, surveying Theodore owlishly over the tops of his horn-rimmed spectacles, "that you must contrive somehow to make a psychological effect on her—to impress yourself indelibly upon her memory. The first step toward accomplishing such a thing would be continuous proximity, so that she becomes familiar with your appearance—"

He rambled on for some time, and Theodore finally left him deep in thought.

After Commencement Day, Theodore whirled out of college, bound for



"Sorry, old top! Well ta-ta. I rather think I must be staggering forth. See you later at the Savoy, eh—what?"

New York in his vermilion-colored roadster, accompanied by a classmate. Two hours out of Brownsville, fate, in the shape of a signpost, played one of her leading cards.

The signpost at a forked road read:

NEW YORK UTICA

Theodore, who actually hadn't thought of Irma for three whole hours, took a coin from his pocket and spun it in the air. Then he deliberately headed his car toward Utica.

"Hey!" shouted his friend. "Where are you going? I've got a date in New York to-night!"

"I'm sorry," mumbled Theodore. "I've got a better one in Utica."

"You're a nut!" said his friend tersely. At the next railroad station he climbed angrily out of the car with his suit case.

At Utica Theodore witnessed "Baby Blue Eyes" (No. 2) for the fourth time, and sent Irma his card during the intermission. Somehow he did not feel so confident as when surrounded by the aura of fame that was ever his at Brownsville. The card came back with a one-line indorsement in violet ink:

"Why should I?"

Anyway, she remembered him. Leaving the theater, he trod on clouds; he was wafted through roseate heav-

ens— Life itself became a temporary ecstasy.

"Baby Blue Eyes" (No. 2) moved to Rome, New York. Thither went Theodore. She moved on to Erie; he followed.

The thing became a habit. He wired home to wondering parents for more shirts and collars, adding characteristically:

"On a little tour. Don't know when or where I'll end up."

He saw "Baby Blue Eyes" from the first rows of Youngstown, Akron, Columbus, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, Logansport—and then some. Not once did Irma unbend even enough to answer his cards; but his spirit was unconquerable. He shipped his roadster home and struck the westward trail with a high heart and a mileage book.

By the time they reached Champaign, Illinois, in the midst of a sweltering August, he had nineteen returned notes from Irma.

On the evening "Baby Blue Eyes" left Champaign, the gods above apparently decided at last to look with favor on Theodore's indomitable persistence.

He was gobbling a hasty supper at the sloppy station counter just before the train left which was to carry the show—and consequently himself—to Peoria. Some one slumped heavily on the seat next to him. Theodore glanced idly at the newcomer and almost spilled his coffee. It was Sol Marx, manager of "Baby Blue Eyes" (No. 2), accompanied by his press agent. Theodore had seen him several times before; he admired any man that could manage Irma.

Marx appeared pale, nervous, and irritable. He gulped down four cups of coffee and muttered continuously to himself. Suddenly he burst out with a loud "damn" and brought his fist down with a crash upon the counter that made the dishes clatter.

"What's wrong now?" demanded the press agent, clearing his throat nervously. He spoke in a tired voice as if something was always wrong with "Baby Blue Eyes."

"We're in a fix, all right! Mellor went to the hospital this afternoon with appendicitis. I can't fill his rôle."

"What's the matter with the understudy?"

Marx turned on him like an infuriated tiger.

"Understudy?" he snarled. "My Gawd! I heard the man over this afternoon, to try him out. He'd wreck the show, that's about all he'd do!"

Theodore suddenly leaned closer. He knew that Mellor was the clever little Englishman who played the part of *Lord Monty Forsythe* of Mayfair, the Perfect Nut. As has been stated before, "Baby Blue Eyes" ran true to form as a typical musical comedy.

The press agent wagged his head sympathetically.

"I'm afraid you won't get any one hereabouts to fill the rôle. Imagine a Peorian with a Piccadilly accent!"

He guffawed loudly at his own thought.

"Quit handing yourself laughs, will you?" Marx snapped at him. "And try to summon a thought—if you're capable of it."

Theodore tapped Marx gently on his shoulder.

"Pardon me," he began. "May I introduce myself? Theodore Hall, member of the Thespian Society of East—"

Marx glanced at him and waved him away with an impatient hand. "We're full up on chorus men."

For an instant Theodore struggled manfully with a desire to avenge himself for this stupendous insult. He realized that a fellow couldn't wear striped collars with impunity west of Buffalo. Then a sudden idea struck him. Diving into his pocket, he pulled

forth a fifty-cent piece, and, screwing it into his eye, he chirped blithely:

"Sorry, old top! Well, ta-ta. —I rather think I must be staggering forth. See you later at the Savoy, eh—what?"

Now these classic words, uttered nightly by *Lord Monty* in the second act of "Baby Blue Eyes," seemed to come from Theodore's lips just as naturally as if he had been playing the part all his life. Marx's jaw dropped in amazement.

"How do you get that way?" he demanded. "I'd have sworn you were Mellor when you said that."

"I ought to know how," replied Theodore almost indignantly, "considering I've seen the show twenty-two times myself. I'm an actor, too. Mellor's part would be a cinch for me."

Marx rubbed his blue chin thoughtfully.

"You couldn't swallow it in time," he said. "We're playing Springfield for a split week commencing to-morrow."

"I know it by heart," answered Theodore promptly.

The result of all this was that Marx heard him recite Mellor's part in the club car while they jolted over the roadbed toward Peoria that night, and engaged him temporarily.

At Peoria he played the rôle. Irma showed no signs of recognition. He wondered whether it were possible that in all those twenty-two times he had occupied a front-row seat and applauded with untiring vigor she had never noticed him. Apparently she had not.

It was his fortune, or rather misfortune, to be cast for the part of one of the most inane, babbling idiots that ever graced the boards of musical comedy—which is saying a mouthful. And in the second act he had to declare his overwhelming love to Irma with the words:

"Old dear, I've a rattling good

wheeze. What I mean to say is, well—eh, how about our getting married—and all that sort of thing?"

And Irma, to demonstrate how little an American girl cared about being *Lady Monty Forsythe* of Mayfair—a subtle bit of satire on the part of the playwright, which, incidentally, went right over the heads of the audience—dismissed him nightly with a scornful curl of her lips:

"Why, you poor, simple soul!"

The first time he suffered this intense agony Theodore found himself wondering whether there had ever before been such a true spectacle of devotion—that of a man deliberately making a fool of himself before the woman he loved, just to be near her. He played the part so well that he could even hear the chorus girls gurgling behind the scenes during his proposal.

At first Irma paid no attention to him whatever. It did not take him long to discover that Irma's personality on and off the stage were two vastly different things. She left the theater immediately after each show and returned to her hotel. The bright lights and jazz bands of after-theater suppers had no lure for her, although she nightly received invitations from small-town sports, most of whom were old enough to know better. She was quiet, hard working, and had ambitions that were higher than the Woolworth Building. She hailed from an obscure Missouri town and had as her aim three-foot electric letters on Broadway. Much as he admired her rejection of all the things considered usual prerequisites of a musical-comedy career, Theodore felt that the poor girl was going the wrong way about it if she wanted to get anywhere. But gradually and surely they became friends.

Theodore was a slow worker, but he made no false steps. By the time they started back on their eastward trip she even began to admire him a little. At



"Er—what I mean to say is—how about our getting married, and all that sort of thing?"

Altoona she consented to dine with him at a hotel, and found him a most entertaining host. Over their coffee she looked at him with those record-smashing, baby-blue eyes of hers and said softly:

"I wonder why it is that an intelligent man like you is content to play such an assinine rôle, and to keep on playing it?"

Theodore's spoon clattered to the table. For an instant he struggled with a desire to tell her everything, to acquaint her then and there with the overwhelming depth of his feelings; it seemed preposterous that he should continue night after night making a fool of himself in her eyes. Then he realized that with judicious handling the

right moment must come sooner or later. But not yet.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered rather lamely.

"The part seems to fit me, doesn't it?" he added with a wry smile.

"Certainly not," answered Irma, and he blessed her secretly for the words.

During the next two weeks he contrived to see much of her. After each performance he was gallantly on hand with taxicabs, suppers, flowers, and other delightfully extravagant things, all of which—incredible as it may seem—were new to Irma; but somehow she trusted him implicitly and accepted all his attentions with a charming grace. He noted how much she was admired wherever they went together; in res-

taurants men and women deliberately turned round at their tables to stare at the dazzling, colorful beauty of her. That he was her escort was in itself ample compensation for the nightly agonies of *Lord Monty*.

Time flew and he was no nearer to broaching the question than when they had first met, except of course that he was now her friend. Irma herself could not help liking more and more this perfectly mannered, perfectly groomed youth who was ever the courteous, thoughtful gentleman—and he wasn't at all bad-looking, either.

When they reached Scranton he happened to look at a calendar for the first time in weeks and suddenly realized—horror of horrors!—that he was due back at Eastern in two days. Now was the time for action, if ever, and he found himself dreading it.

Immediately after the Saturday matinee he went out for a long walk, smoking many cigarettes and meditating upon how he was to introduce the fateful subject to Irma. At dusk he returned to the hotel, confident that he had evolved the perfection of proposals. As a matter of fact, it really wasn't bad—for Theodore.

He went to his rooms, shaved, and applied his twin, silver hairbrushes with masculine care, looked at himself critically in the mirror, and then telephoned up his name to Irma.

"Down in a minute," she told the room clerk, and joined the agonized Theodore half an hour later in the palm room.

They began by exchanging polite weather forecasts, and drifted on to equally safe topics. They talked and talked, and ended up just where they began. Presently a great clock chimed seven sonorously; Irma half rose from the secluded sofa where they had been sitting.

"I really ought to be getting ready," she began.

The fatal moment had arrived. Theodore cleared his throat; the room was starting to spin around him. Now, by a curious and dreadful coincidence, Irma was wearing a red dress; he had seen her wearing just such a dress when he proposed to her as *Lord Monty* in "Baby Blue Eyes." Funny, wasn't it, that she should be wearing it to-day? His mind became fixed on that dress; he could think of nothing else. The perfection of proposals vanished utterly from his mind. He began to stutter horribly. In a sudden desperate effort he blurted out the first words that came into his reeling head:

"Er—what I mean to say is—how about our getting married, and all that sort of thing?"

Seemingly, Theodore had disappeared. In his place sat the incarnation of *Lord Monty*, perspiring and mopping a white and corrugated brow. Reggie Tresk, had he been present, would have gone wild over this superb demonstration of psychological effect.

Irma seemed hypnotized. In odd, mechanical tones she slowly answered him:

"You poor, simple soul!"

Just like that.

Dazed and shattered, Theodore picked up his hat and fled from the hotel, cursing himself, Irma, and the world in general. Outside the door he ran into Marx, looking disagreeably fat and pleased with himself. Here at least was a chance to unload some of the pent-up anger of his outraged feelings. He placed himself in front of the manager, gesticulating with long arms, wild-eyed, his hair blowing in the breeze.

"I throw up my contract right now!" he shouted. "You and 'Baby Blue Eyes' (No. 2) and the whole sickening crowd can go to Hades, for all I care! Keep your money; I don't want it!"

To his surprise and chagrin, Marx, as soon as he had recovered from his

astonishment at the unexpected outburst, did not appear in the least disconcerted. He struck a match, lighted an immense cigar, and pawed Theodore patronizingly on the shoulder.

"I was just coming to tell you that Mellor had rejoined us this afternoon and that we didn't need you any more, but evidently you've heard it already. Still, don't get sore about it, young feller; you'll get your money all right. It was only a temporary contract, anyway."

Ye gods! He was not even to be allowed the consolation of breaking up the show. He left Marx and tore down the street, gibbering incoherently.

In college, two days later, he discovered Reggie Tresk, curled up in a leather armchair, puffing contentedly at his old brier. Reggie rose to greet him with a cheerful grin.

"Tell me," he said, "how did it all turn out? I didn't get a line from you all summer. Did you try continuous proximity? Did it have the desired psychological effect that I predicted?"

Theodore's fingers began to twitch. His face grew scarlet.

"Do you want to die? Continuous proximity! Psychological effect! Ye gods! Of course it had a psychological effect, you poor, miserable freak, *but it was all wrong!*"

It took Reggie nearly a week to coax the whole story from Theodore. When he learned it all he almost choked with mirth.

"Simple soul is right!" he spluttered. "When I told you to hang around her, how was I to know that you'd rush off and get a job with the express

purpose of appearing as an idiot in her eyes? Any girl would be affected by that! I think a girl will forgive most anything in a man as long as he doesn't make a fool of himself before her, even in fun." He paused, then added with a sudden chuckle: "And that red dress.

Rather an interesting bit of psychology——"

Theodore hurled a volume at him.



"She sobs on my shoulder and begs me to cut it from the show."

Out on the campus he jammed his fingers in his ears to shut out the sound of Reggie's chuckles.

During Christmas week Theodore sped down the Hudson to New York. His mother found him pale and wan. At times he betrayed peculiar traits which puzzled her. Most noticeable was the way in which he shunned even the mention of theaters; he had apparently lost all interest in his acting, for which she was devoutly thankful, as she had planned a legal career for him. Even the sight of a theater program seemed to upset him.

He went to a dozen parties, ascertaining carefully beforehand that they did not include a box party, and managed to make himself peculiarly uninteresting to every one who met him. On New Year's Day he boarded a Fifth Avenue bus, having it in his mind to start the calendar right by seeing Reggie and making amends.

The bus was crowded and he sat down next to a portly man who was inconsiderately spread out over three-quarters of the only available seat. The man was Sol Marx. Instinctively Theodore jerked his head away, but it was too late. Marx grasped his hand.

"Why, it's Theodore, as I live!"

For a few minutes they talked at random. Then Theodore, although he had been trying desperately not to say it, blurted out suddenly:

"How's 'Baby Blue Eyes' these days?"

"Say!" said Marx. "You know what happened after you left, don't you? Didn't Irma write you?"

"Nope." Very shakily.

"It was the damndest, funniest thing I ever come across in all my theatrical days. The night you left Scranton, Melfor took back his old part. Well, when it came to the place in the second act where *Lord Monty* makes that hash of of a proposal, Irma almost broke down.

"After the show she comes to me and threatens to throw up her contract! Says nothin' will ever induce her to play that scene again. Sobs on my shoulder and begs me to cut it from the show. Wouldn't tell me why. Of course I didn't care so much, as we'd nearly finished the run, so I cut it out to oblige her. Nice little kid, Irma. I'd give a lot to know why she got all het up over that scene."

Theodore suddenly gripped his arm. "Did—did she mention me?"

"Well, now I come to think of it, I believe she wrote you a letter, but nobody in the show had your address. And she did say to me that if you wanted to see her, she'd be stoppin' at—lemme see—I think it was the Century Hotel in New York. She hoped I might run across you some time—Why, hey, young man! Where you goin'?"

THE PERFECT MASQUERADE

HE is the world's cleverest criminal.

The populace has come to know him through the frequent publication of his photograph in the daily press; the police boast that they would recognize him in any disguise. Yet the afternoon on which he killed an alderman, robbed a bank, and set fire to the city hall, he walked through great crowds to the Grand Central and escaped detection. Now, after five weeks, no trace of him has been discovered. The police refuse to believe that he could have gotten out of New York.

But the trick was really very simple. The criminal disguised himself with an armful of paper parcels and the commuter expression, and stood patiently in line as he waited for his train.

IRENE VAN VALKENBURG.



The Increase

By
Alexander
Harvey

DETERMINED though he was to ask his employer for an increase in his salary, the man hesitated before he opened the door of the private office of the great capitalist.

The man who wanted more money for his work was slim, middle-aged, somewhat neutral in general expression. Mediocrity was written all over him. It seemed appropriate that he should hesitate then and there.

In a moment more he had turned the handle of the door and was inside, blinking at a heavy man who sat in front of a large desk.

"Rogers!" The heavy man spoke the name heartily. "I guess your errand. Sit down."

Rogers took a seat beside the desk and remained in silent contemplation of the heavy man, who frowned over some papers.

"Now, Rogers," exclaimed the heavy man suddenly, wheeling in his chair to confront his emloyee, "you want more money. Don't deny it."

"I don't deny it, Mr. Cartwright," murmured the other, somewhat flustered by the manner of the big man. "I hope you think I ought to be getting more."

"I don't, Rogers," snapped the heavy Cartwright. "But I mean to give you more."

Rogers blinked silently.

"You're drawing forty dollars a week now, Rogers," sighed the big man; "more than you're worth."

"Mr. Cartwright!"

"Don't Mr. Cartwright me, Rogers. How much more a week do you want?"

Rogers summoned all his courage.

"I want fifty dollars a week."

He spoke with the affected boldness of the naturally timid man and he snapped his jaws upon his words. Cartwright laughed heavily.

"Rogers," he said, "I'm going to pay you hereafter a hundred and fifty dollars a week."

In spite of himself, Rogers gasped, while Cartwright proceeded:

"You're not worth it, of course. Now, we've got to have a seven-thousand-dollar man here. We've tried this man and that man and they all fail. I'm going to try another plan."

Cartwright took a box of cigars from a drawer in his desk and handed it to Rogers. In another minute they were both smoking.

"The method here," proceeded Cartwright between long puffs, "has been to tell a man to make himself worth more and he'd get more."

"Yes." There was a note of bitterness in the voice of Rogers. "I've heard that myself—many a time."

"Oh," put in Cartwright, "the plan is good in theory, but it does not work out in practice."

"I never heard of a theory that quite worked out in practice."

"Nor I," snapped Cartwright. "I'm going to hand you a hundred and fifty

dollars a week and tell you to make yourself worth that much."

"Cartwright," spoke up Rogers in a tone that was quite new to the other and with an eagerness on his face that made his eyes snap, "I decline your proposition."

Cartwright frowned.

"I'm not surprised," he snapped with that heavy jaw, "for I always supposed you lacked ambition."

Rogers laughed a little unpleasantly. He exhaled a cloud of smoke and looked at his employer with an easy confidence quite new for him. He was declining a brilliant offer and the fact gave him a thrill, a stimulus. He felt oddly strong and decisive.

"Cartwright, suppose, for the sake of argument, I were to accept your proposition—I'm declining it, mind, and you can't change my attitude—but suppose I were to accept that money——"

He paused. Cartwright was looking at him curiously. He divined a revelation and as a man who made his money by studying his fellow creatures attentively he felt that he ought to get at the bottom of the mystery here. There was obviously something here besides lack of ambition to contend with. The transformation in the personality of Rogers convinced him of it.

"The moment my wife learned that I was getting some seven thousand a year," went on Rogers, lying back carelessly in his chair and addressing his eyes to the ceiling, "she'd insist that I keep a car."

"Oh!" A light broke over the mind of Cartwright. "You don't want her to have one."

"She's extravagant as it is," confessed Rogers with a smile. "Then there's my daughter. She'd want clothes on a scale that I would think reckless. She'd give up her teaching and she could support herself at a pinch with her teaching."

Cartwright frowned again.

"So you don't want your family to enjoy life?"

"Cartwright," retorted Rogers, "your wife has a car. You have another. I know the scale upon which your daughters and your son are living. I know you go home often at night and dine alone, grandly, I admit, but alone."

The frown on Cartwright's face relaxed as he followed the other's drift.

"I've been with you twenty-one years," proceeded Rogers earnestly. "I've seen you change from a poor man into a rich one, and you were happier when you were poor than you are to-day. Cartwright," Rogers went on, bringing his fist down on the desk, "I wouldn't change my family for yours for all your income."

Cartwright was looking anywhere but at Rogers. Suddenly Rogers laid a hand upon the arm of his employer.

"Cartwright, look at me." Their eyes met. "We have here a young man who would get the spirit of that seven-thousand-dollar experiment of yours. Try it on him."

"I don't know that young man, perhaps, as well as you do, Rogers. I don't think I could handle him as I could you."

"I'll handle him," cried Rogers. "I'll make him worth the money if you give it to him."

"You make a man worth seven thousand dollars a year when you're not worth fifteen hundred a year yourself!"

Rogers took a letter from his pocket.

"Read that, Cartwright."

It was an offer of fifty dollars a week from the concern that Cartwright dreaded most in the world.

"Rogers," said Cartwright slowly, "send in that young man. I dare say I'm mistaken about your value to us. You shall have your fifty a week."

"Thank you!" Rogers rose to go. "I can vouch for the young man I'm sending in to you. He's going to marry my daughter."



WHAT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Longuille

To the Heavens above us O look and behold
The Planets that love us, all harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses against us shall bide
While the stars in their courses do fight on our side?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

HOW TO READ YOUR OWN HOROSCOPE

LESSON VIII.

WHEN the Moon is poised in the sign Pisces on a map of life, it is considered by astrologers as being not so badly placed. Since the Moon is of a watery nature, as is also the sign of the fishes, Pisces, there is more or less harmony manifested. The personality of the native who has this position of the Moon on his chart at birth, is very quiet, retiring, and somewhat easy-going. If other conditions do not help, this native will frequently need the constant encouragement of his friends to be able to accomplish much of importance in life. This type needs what is called more "backbone."

That "variety is the spice of life" this Moon-in-Pisces person fully believes and tries to demonstrate. On a weak chart this native shows irresolute traits, and cannot be depended upon to carry any project very far alone. Weariness and discouragement will surely overcome him. The path of life will be full of obstacles, and oppositions sufficient to make him "sit up and take notice" will have to be borne. There will probably be some traveling, for the most part by water.

Poetry, plays, and books that stir the

emotional or romantic side of the nature will be a source of pleasure to these people. Pisces is a mediumistic sign; thus the native may easily become psychic. The wonderful imaginations and the emotional temperaments of these people lead them on to success. Inspiration, rather than sound reasoning power, will be evident in their acts. Just how a native of this type will respond to an idea can never be anticipated, for at times his spirit will be light and buoyant, and again, without apparent cause or reason, quite the reverse, although he may catch quickly the spirit of the person to whom he is talking. This native is not likely to possess a very firm or muscular frame, and there may be trouble for the mother resulting from his birth.

"The Sun," says the great astrologer, Alan Leo, "represents the Silent Monitor of all. The Sun is silent, but potent. It shines on all, good and evil alike, and is the essential "music of the spheres," out of which all harmony and order are produced. The Moon represents the keynote through which the chord of harmony vibrates; while Mercury is the string or thread, up and down which

the silence and the sound are moving as the pulsations in an organ pipe."

Having now studied the individuality, through the Sun's position in the various signs, and the personality, as signified by the Moon, the next step is to determine the mental characteristics of the native according to the position of Mercury, that wonderful "mirror of the mind."

This mental significator in the sign Aries at the moment of a person's birth renders him mentally alert, with mind always quick to grasp a situation. The brain is exceedingly active, full of ideas and schemes. Sometimes this person will be called fickle and changeable, or irritable and nervous, but these manifestations are only impatience at slower minds which have to dwell on a subject a long time before grasping its real meaning.

Taurus seems to make the mind slower and is therefore considered more stable. It takes a much longer time for an idea to percolate through a Taurus brain than through the quick, rapid mind of the preceding sign, Aries. The Mercury-in-Taurus native is often affected by feeling, and a deep love of the arts will be manifest.

When Mercury is found in Gemini at the time of one's birth, the native is very likely to show decided literary talent at some time in life. This sign helps him to give forth in speech or writing the thoughts he has accumulated.

The sign Cancer influencing the mind will tend to make it supersensitive and not wholly to be relied upon. Ideas will flit through the brain constantly, some of which may be of value to public welfare. This is the type of mind that is always having "hunches," and nine times out of ten they are truly inspired. This is not a strong position for Mercury to occupy in the zodiac, and if this planet is not well aspected by other

planets which would lend it strength and color, the mind of the native will be changeable, inquisitive, and weak.

But Leo, the sign which follows Cancer, is one that will give to the native with Mercury located therein a brain that is strong and rational. This type of mind will be found in positions of responsibility, and is usually well able to control with reason all those who come under its leadership. The commands of these individuals are never tyrannical, nor their manner overbearing. Subordinates seem to catch the good spirit of this kind of management and gladly obey the dictates of a brain signified by the position of Mercury in Leo. Those so signified seem to possess, also, the wonderful faculty of making those under their control believe that they are working and thinking out their own problems.

Virgo seems to reflect in this "mirror of the mind" quite a different quality. The brain is very active and the memory is good. Ideas must be practical to appeal to this Mercury-in-Virgo mentality. This well-balanced type of brain may be compared to a very orderly desk. It will never be judged "scatter-brained," for every thought is on file, and can be consulted without hunting. Imagine the method and system suggested in this comparison, and you will have a very good idea of the mental quality a native possesses who is born when Mercury occupies Virgo.

When the calm, cool sign of judgment and comparison, Libra, contains this mental significator, Mercury, a more eloquent and agreeable mind is the result. This type of mind is very intuitive, artistic, and given to humane thoughts which may be conveyed to others in a most attractive and persuasive manner. For this reason it often makes a "hit" in the literary world.

Next comes the positive sign, Scorpio. When a chart of the heavens at birth shows that Mercury is in this sign, do

not try to win over the native to your way of thinking; it will be a waste of time. The old saying, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still," would surely be applicable. Never imagine for a moment that you can keep any of your secrets hidden from a mind colored by Scorpio. It cannot be done. At the same time this type of mind is the most secretive in the world. It is not a bad combination, one must admit, because it is not only its own secrets this brain can lock up, but others' as well. This native will be clever and will see the humor in most situations. He is a good, faithful, tenacious friend—but look out for his ill will, and remember the sting of the scorpion! A brain of this type should make a wonderful success in life as a chemist, surgeon, or doctor. Mercury can be poised in no better sign of the zodiac.

The pointer seems to swing almost to the opposite mental characteristics when the sign Sagittarius contains Mercury, for then frank, open, straightforward qualities are manifest. Where a native of Scorpio may be criticized for being too secretive, a Sagittarian may be too outspoken. Religious thoughts may be very much in evidence, and ideas will be expressed with ease and confidence. This is a difficult position to understand on account of the dual quality of the mind.

Mercury in Capricorn often gives a very versatile mind, and although it may not show the brilliancy of the foregoing type, its slow, methodical ways "get there" in the most difficult, profound subjects. The fable of the hare and the tortoise gives a good illustration of the mental workings of Capricorn as compared with Sagittarius. The tortoise (Capricorn), by his slow, persistent, steady gait, always wins the race. It may seem rather ambitious for a tortoise to start a race with a hare, but the Mercury-in-Capricorn brain is

ambitious, and, at the same time, it understands that with its own subtle, cautious, diplomatic ways it has as good a chance of winning as the hare with its quick, brilliant, but diffusive methods.

It must be a high type of mind to gain the best through the sign Aquarius. With Mercury poised in this division of the zodiac, the native may achieve great things in this world. The memory will be good. Learning comes very easily, as also does its benefic application to everyday life. A low type of mind in this sign seems to lose all the good qualities, which go over its head without leaving any impression.

It is said that the worst sign Mercury can occupy at the time of a person's birth is Pisces; the next in point of bad influence is Cancer. Both signs give a mediumistic type of mind, but Pisces is the most unfavorable. This kind of person is prone to have fits of "the blues," which may often be helped, however, by friends of another and more positive character. A very great deal depends upon what aspects Mercury receives from other planets when in this zodiacal sign.

Answers to Correspondents.

Mr. R. B. D., Born Tuesday, April 10, 1894, Chicago, Illinois.—You were born with the Sun in Aries and the Moon in Gemini, positions which give an exceptionally harmonious blend to the individuality and personal characteristics. However much you may be lacking in fixity of purpose, you are clever and quick-witted, and with very little training you would make a success in life as a newspaper reporter. There seems to have been a great change which came to you last year, when you were twenty-five. When you are twenty-seven, or thereabouts, a stroke of good luck will come to you. I hope you will be writing or traveling then.

Mrs. A. Z., Born July 17, 1899, Saturday, at 10 p. m., Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, B. C.—You will be most fortunate in some study of art, or in an occupation in connection with law. However, there are strong influences around you tending to a religious or spiritual life. I am glad to see that you have met and married the right man. Your earthly ex-

istence will probably terminate under a train of bad directions when your constitution at the same time will not be able to cope with the evil aspects. This, of course, is hard for me to judge, but as I glance ahead in your life, every adverse period seems to have a saving grace, so I judge that you will live to a ripe old age.

Miss R. H., Born March 6, 1901, Wednesday, 2 a. m., Massachusetts.—The aspects I find in your life tend to give your personality strong learnings toward a Platonic union, or a very strange married life. There may be some peculiar deception to afflict your life, or you will cultivate eccentric or uncommon views which will isolate you from other people. You ought to be clever in mathematics. When you were very young a tremendous influence came into your life. If you had been older you would have married. As it is, I

think you may not be married now until in the very early forties.

Mrs. M. M. T., Born Sunday, December 28, 1884, Wilkinson County, Georgia—You were born with the Sun in the sign Capricorn. You have a rather quiet, retiring nature. Good things to eat appeal to you strongly, and it is very hard to be really temperate in your diet. Look to your diet very closely and your health will improve. You have an interesting chart, and I predict a very successful life, especially the last part. If your health is poor just now, it cannot last very long. You will probably take quite a journey in less than a year, which will benefit you greatly, but not suddenly. Prepare for a strenuous, prosperous period in a short time to come. I am sorry that space does not permit me to answer all of your questions.



MOUNTAIN BORN

MOUNTAIN born and mountain bred,

I can love you, I,
More than any city girl.
Will you let me try?

I can go where lesser ones
Fear to tread beside you.
If you wish to dare life's peaks,
Could I chide you?

Little lives and little souls,
Little heart that quails,
Let us leave them all, and take
Life's rough trails.

Mountain born and mountain bred—
Cheek and arm of tan—
You shall see if I am fit
Partner for a man!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



The Cub

By Edwina Levin

Author of "The Man," "Leona Goes a Hunting," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

Do you remember that delightfully funny story, "The Man," published in these pages some months ago? "The Cub" is that same would-be-grown-up, serious youth. Meet him again—this time in an affair of his own.

IT all came of my sister Edna running away to Palm Beach and leaving me in the care of Zenda Tobin, as though I were an infant instead of a young man—I say it in all modesty—of considerable attractiveness to the fair sex. Her attitude in the matter was, in fact, little short of criminal. More than that, it has changed my whole outlook on life.

Those who know me as a happy-go-lucky sort of man, talkative and cheerful, would find it hard to believe that all this is but a cloak to hide my real bitterness of spirit. Nor have I confided to my sister, to this day, the fatal trap she set for me when she left me to daily association with Zenda Tobin and her husband.

"My dear," Tom said to Edna, on the very day they were leaving for Palm Beach, "do you think it wise of you to loan the house to strangers?" We were having breakfast in our rather lovely breakfast room, overlooking the Hudson. Edna glanced up in surprise from her casaba melon.

I had known all the time that Tom did not approve; and also that he would voice his disapproval when it would be too late to make any difference. My brother-in-law is a futile sort of fellow, completely wrapped up in my sister, a slender girl of twenty-eight, with glorious red hair, which she abominates, and a corresponding temper.

"Why, Tom," she cried, "if you didn't like the idea, why didn't you say so in the first place? And, anyhow, they are not strangers. You know Zenda Tobin is one of Laura's best friends."

Laura Dixon was Edna's dearest friend, and it had been by her suggestion that Edna had decided to loan our house to the Tobins, who lived in Washington and wanted to come to New York for five or six weeks before sailing for Europe, but couldn't find a suitable place to live. Laura had been getting me into trouble of one sort or another since the days when she fed me lollypops to keep me from telling about her and Edna's beaux, they being young ladies of sixteen and seventeen when I was but a youngster of seven.

This difference in mine and Edna's ages, together with the fact that our mother died when I was but ten and left my fortune in Edna's and Tom's hands, accounts for my sister's absurd attitude toward me, though I am now past eighteen and a man of considerable discretion.

"Besides," Edna went on, as always bound to put Tom in the wrong, "everybody knows the Tobins. He's ambassador to Greece or South America or some place, and perfectly responsible."

My sister went to college, but I'm sure she didn't pick up much information as she passed through. She prob-

ably thinks the equator is cold and that Africa is in the Western Hemisphere, so little does she care for details.

"Oh, I don't object," Tom protested. "And I know they're perfectly all right. But I thought perhaps it might have been unwise on account of John."

I knew, of course, what he meant. Everybody has read of Mrs. Tobin's beauty and charm.

"On account of John! Why, it's on account of him that I'm letting them come here. I wouldn't think of going away and leaving him in the middle of his first year in college without somebody to look after him." She had completely missed Tom's point.

"Don't be childish, Edna!" I admonished. "You make yourself absurd by persistently treating me as if I were a baby."

Tom, who had the funny paper spread out on the table at his right hand, bent over it and chuckled audibly. Tom is always chuckling at newspaper humor. Edna merely set her cup down and stared at me as if she thought I had taken leave of my senses, though I am sure we have discussed the subject of age often enough.

"You're leaving the servants here," I continued as gently as I could. "I should get on capitally." I try never to lose my temper with Edna, as she is just an excitable child, so to speak. "I hardly need a mother to tuck a bib under my chin and feed me with a spoon at my time of life. And I'm quite sure I shan't permit Mrs. Tobin to dress me; for, even were I so devoid of modesty myself, I take it that her husband might have some objection to her performing such intimate services for an attractive young man."

Having thus delivered myself of what I considered a bit of rather fine satire, I continued to eat my breakfast calmly, the while I went back to reading a book I had by me.

Tom was apparently so convulsed over those stupid funnies that I doubt if he knew what we were talking about.

Edna, however, turned tragic eyes in his direction.

"That boy will be the death of me," she said in an all-gone voice, such as she reserves for those occasions when I have succeeded in annoying her to the utmost extreme. "Tom, what am I going to do with him?"

Tom threw back his head and laughed loudly. This inclination toward loudness on the part of my brother-in-law is rather trying at times.

"Let him alone, I should say," answered Tom when he could speak.

You can see from this that he is really a man of remarkable intelligence, in spite of his tendency to vulgarity.

"Let him alone!" I fear my sister shrieked it. "Why, it's all I can do to keep him down as it is! If I were to let him alone I don't know what would happen to this house. He'd likely put us both out before long."

"Don't be ridiculous, Edna," I retorted, stirring my coffee jubilantly. I must confess I always experience a thrill of triumph when I so annoy Edna at the very outset of a quarrel that she can think of nothing to say. She is usually so wordy.

"Even were I so inclined," I went on, "you know our mother left the house to us jointly; so, naturally, I have no right to put you out. But that's beside the point. What, I insist, are these Tobins to do for me that the servants could not do?"

"They are to look after you and see that you take care of yourself. You know perfectly well, John, if I were to leave you here with nobody but the servants, you would never go to bed on time or get up in the mornings for school! You'd sit up all night reading Swinburne or—what's that book you have beside your plate now?"

"The Life and Love of the Insect," by Fabre," I returned with serious dignity. "A most interesting book; one that every young man and woman should desimulate thoroughly."

Edna flung her hands up into the air in an absurd gesture, crying: "Help!" Then to me, "Assimilate, John! If you must use big words, use them correctly."

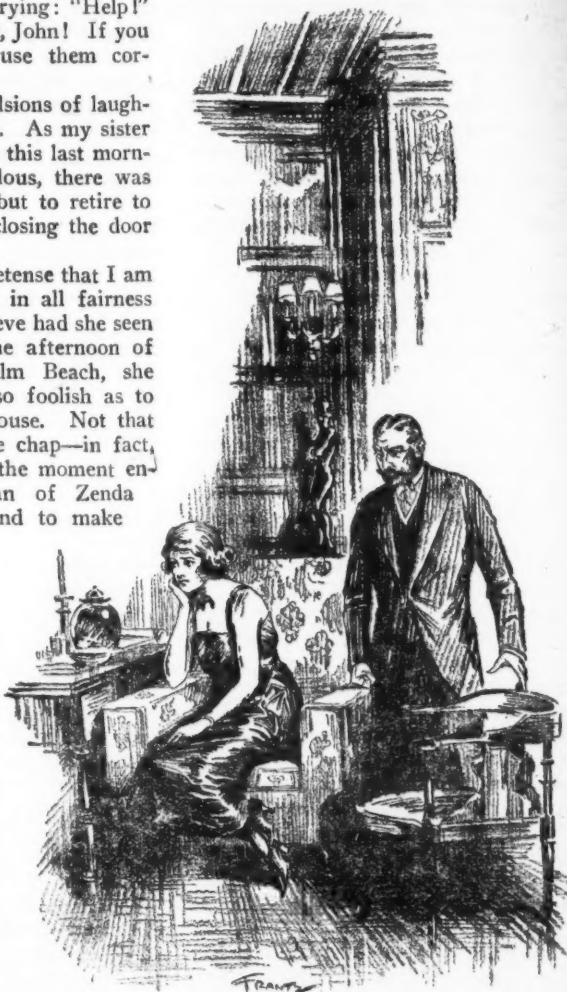
Tom went into convulsions of laughter, and I left the table. As my sister appeared determined on this last morning to make me ridiculous, there was nothing for me to do but to retire to my den, which I did, closing the door after me.

In spite of Edna's pretense that I am a baby, I wish to say, in all fairness to her, that I really believe had she seen Zenda Tobin before the afternoon of her departure for Palm Beach, she would not have been so foolish as to ensconce her in our house. Not that I am an impressionable chap—in fact, my affections were at the moment engaged. But a woman of Zenda Tobin's type was bound to make powerful appeal to any red-blooded man.

The Tobins arrived around three o'clock, and, after general greetings, went upstairs; and my sister came to my den to have a last word with me. I was smoking my pipe, but I laid it down and took her in my arms. She was all broken up over leaving me. Always before, I had gone with her.

"You are a darling!" she sobbed. "If you just wouldn't assume that air of grownupness!"

I had no inclination for disputing with her. And, though I was ashamed of myself, I could not stop the flow of my own tears. I am greatly attached to my sister, and so many things can happen in six weeks. People get



"I tell you it's got to stop! I've had my fill of that young cub, and I don't propose to be harassed by him any further!"

drowned at Palm Beach, and every now and then a shark comes up and snatches off somebody's legs, or a train runs off the track. One doesn't think of these things if one is going along, but if one is left at home—

Presently Tom knocked at the door to say the car was waiting. I accompanied them to the Pennsylvania Station; then returned to the house to take up my abode under the espionage of the Tobins.

I think, just here, I should describe Zenda Tobin. Above medium height, with that slenderness which, amounting to positive thinness, gives a woman the appearance of extreme youth. Her clothes appeared just to hang over her narrow shoulders, while her waist and hips showed no perceptible difference in measurement; and she walked with a kind of slinking grace which held one's attention. With hair a sort of ash-gold, nose distinctly retroussé, small pale face, and perfect teeth, her charm was indescribable, her beauty dazzling. Yet it was her marvelous eyes—big, deep, dark gray, heavily fringed with dark lashes, reminding one of moonlit pools, inviting and dangerous—which fairly took one's breath.

I noted all this at dinner that evening, merely, however, as I then thought, in the impersonal way in which one praises a compelling picture in an art museum. As a matter of fact, I busied myself with the usual small talk of polite society, not failing to engage Zenda in that gay banter in which, I flatter myself, I excel. Though I must say that Mr. Tobin was somewhat of a skeleton at the feast, so to speak. He was a cold, serious man, with grim mouth and eyes that seemed fairly to look into one's soul.

It occurred to me that Mrs. Tobin was a *young* woman. She kept laughing at my conversation as if greatly amused thereby.

Morine, the young woman upon

whom my affections were centered at the moment, says that when a girl laughs at everything a man says it's "a sure sign." And I have observed this fact myself. My mind was full of Morine. Also, Zenda's husband was my house guest. And honor imposes obligations upon a man.

It was over the coffee that I saw Zenda's marvelous orbs turned on me with a light in them, most curious, and I began to feel their power. Though little did I realize what was before me, or I should have fled my house.

Mr. Tobin and I were discoursing on Egyptian art, when, happening to glance over at his wife, I caught her studying me with tender speculation.

Naturally a man in my time of life has picked up considerable experience with women and has got to know the little telltale signs of growing attraction. There was no mistaking the look in Zenda's eyes.

The most annoying thing in the world to a man, I think, is to blush at such a moment. Yet I could not quell the hot tide that rushed up to my face. My heart gave a distinct throb. I lost the thread of what I was saying, and stammered outrageously.

"I—I—yes, as I was saying—in criticizing the Egyptian's fondness for bright colors we must take into consideration the peculiar lighting of the age and the country. Artificial light being wholly inadequate, it was necessary that vivid colors be used both for the subdued gloom of vaultlike chambers, as well as for the glare of the sun. For, as you doubtless know, intensified light requires as brilliant color as does gloom."

We had been going into this subject at Columbia only the previous week, but I saw no reason to mention this fact.

"Very true," agreed Mr. Tobin. And he launched into a lengthy decalogue on the subject, which I must admit I did

not hear. I was perturbed over that look which I had surprised in Zenda's eyes.

She had, no doubt to put me at my ease, begun calling me John, without prefix; and I, feeling that she might think me lacking in cordiality, returned the pretty compliment, so that I no longer addressed her as Mrs. Tobin. Mr. Tobin, on the other hand, while dropping the prefix, addressed me as Brenton, which, being the formal man-to-man mode of address, did not invite familiarity on my side. Furthermore, he was a man of national importance, which commanded a certain respect.

But, as I was saying, my mind was now entirely diverted from the fascinating subject of Egyptian art to the fascinating depth of woman's eyes.

What did that look mean? It suddenly occurred to me that here was not a happy woman. And, looking at her husband, tall, dark, bearded, grim of mouth, serious of manner, I could understand.

"Going out, John?" inquired Zenda, when I passed through the living room, after dinner, with my hat and cane.

"Why, yes," I replied, surprised at her question. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing," she answered, "only I thought perhaps"—she stammered, blushed, and finished rather lamely—if you have no studying to do——"

"I prepared my work this afternoon," I returned with some hauteur. What right had she to interfere with my affairs? Instantly, however, I regretted my manner, for into her marvelous eyes came a pained look. "Of course, I've no right to object," she replied hastily.

I considered. There could be no doubt that, right or not, Zenda did object. But I had an engagement with Morine. She would be waiting for me. I could not break my word.

I bent over Zenda's hand. "I'm sorry," I said. Then went out hurriedly.

Morine proved vapid and uninteresting. Positively I had never before noticed it. She kept giggling every time I made a remark and crying, "Oh, John, you are so clever!"

Not one serious remark did she make all evening, but when she talked at all merely raved over some girl's frock or hat or told what somebody's boyfriend had said.

Now that sort of chatter is all very well when one is young, but a man soon gets fed up on it.

I left Morine's house at ten o'clock, after spending the longest evening of my career, and I knew the truth—I had outgrown Morine.

I dare say it is this tendency on the part of man to outgrow women which causes so much married disaster. My feelings were in a curious tumult when I reached the seclusion of my rooms. I had arrived at that time in a man's life when all my former affairs appeared as mere childish fancies. Edna had been right. I had been indeed a mere boy.

Now I felt quite grown up, almost old. How lonely I would be! For all the women of my set were *young*. How differently Zenda talked! She had things to say! And she could listen as well, and laugh. She gave a man the feeling that he was almost witty. How different from the empty giggles of the young!

Not that Zenda was old. She was, in fact, a mere girl of twenty-four or five, I should say. I believe a woman should be older than a man. Then there is no danger of his outgrowing her.

At last I fell asleep and dreamed that Zenda came to me, and, flinging herself upon my breast, begged me to fly with her to a land where her husband could never find her. And all night we were flying like Paris and Helen pursued by the hosts of her husband's armies, who at times almost caught us—sometimes passing a clump

of bushes in which we were secreted, almost brushing us with their bodies. At last I got Mr. Tobin at a corner of a snake fence, such as I have seen in the South, and decapitated him. His armies ran away, leaving me in the midst of their general's gore! And so hideous was the sight of him standing up there in the fence corner that I cried out, and sat up in bed to find it broad day.

By considerable exercise of my strong will, I shook off the hideous dream and, dressing myself with meticulous care, descended to the breakfast room. Never, if I live to be a centurian, shall I forget that occasion, when I had to face Zenda in the presence of her husband and engage in the banalities of the breakfast table.

As I drew her chair out for her, I had a hideous, sinking sensation as if my knees were about to give way under me. But I succeeded in seating her and reaching my own chair without accident.

Mr. Tobin did not fetch a newspaper to the table with him, a habit which I had sometimes resented in Tom, but would have welcomed in Mr. Tobin. Instead, he gravely inquired as to how I had slept, much as if *he* were the host. Then he made some comment on the Giants' chances for the coming season, a cue which I very naturally followed up, being anxious to conceal my thoughts under the cover of conversation.

In the course of breakfast, it suddenly occurred to me that, though Mr. Tobin chatted with me in friendly fashion and Zenda answered me courteously whenever addressed, there was an undeniable constraint between husband and wife. Not once during the entire meal did they address a voluntary remark to each other. And Zenda kept her eyes for the most part on her plate. What could it mean?

Naturally, I was perturbed. Had he

surprised that tender look in her eyes as they had rested on me the previous evening? I decided this was not problematical, and put it out of my mind.

But I could not concentrate on my studies that day. And so frail is human nature that in the evening I could not resist the temptation to make a little test. One wants to know if one is right.

We three were seated in our large, rather handsome living room. Mr. Tobin was reading as usual, Zenda and I talking. Presently I consulted my watch, and rose with a murmured apology.

Instantly I saw annoyance and disapproval in her lovely face. My heart leaped involuntarily at sight of it.

"Going out again, John?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm taking a woman to the theater this evening," I returned, watching closely to see what effect my announcement would have upon her.

There was no mistaking it. She was jealous.

"Really, John," she said, "do you think you ought to go to the theater during the week nights? You'll feel so sleepy in the morning."

"I shan't go if you prefer it," I returned calmly.

Such a look of gratitude overspread her lovely face that I quite felt justified in having lied to her about going to the theater in the first place, though lying is not one of my vices. I had promised Edna, before she left, that I would not attend the theaters except upon Friday or Saturday nights, and my promise is sacred to me.

I glanced out of the corner of my eye to see how her husband took our little conversation, but he was buried in his book and the smoke of a cigar, and apparently had not heard.

"Thank you, John, dear," she said. "I appreciate that." She reached out for my hand and gave it a tender

squeeze, while her eyes held mine in tender caress.

I went to my den and sank into my big, comfortable chair in a tempest of emotions. She loved me! This glorious woman! And I loved her! There could be no denying it. I loved her as I had loved no other woman before. Every nerve of me tingled with the throbbing, ecstatic knowledge!

Well, what was to be done about it? Whatever my emotional perturbances, I try always to apply reason to the case. Here was I, a young man just entering college, and with only such money as my sister saw fit to dole out to me from my share of our mother's estate. Certainly I was in no position to marry. Marry! I had in my foolish youth dawdled with the thought of nuptial ties, but never before had the word "marry" been used by me seriously. And what a thrilling word it was! I said it over and over to myself.

"Marry!" "Marry!" Then, "Wife!" "Wife!" No wonder men sacrifice their rights as free citizens, give up all the pleasures of bachelorhood, and saddle themselves with the responsibility of extravagant women, bawling brats, and the servant question for the privilege of owning a "wife."

But how could I support a wife?

Again, was it not dishonorable—even caddish of me to entertain thoughts of love with regard to the wife of my own guest? I pondered this phase of the matter long and seriously, and came to the final conclusion that there was but one course for me—I must nip this in the bud!

In six weeks Edna would be at home again. Zenda and her husband would sail away to Europe. I would probably not see them again until I had finished college. Also, I would have attained my majority and come into my own fortune. If *then* we still loved each

other, we would know what to do about it.

So does man in his weakness propose; but otherwise does Fate in her might dispose.

The Tobins were not doing society in New York during their short stay, Mr. Tobin being busy with some government affairs and Zenda devoting her time chiefly to shopping, preparatory to her trip abroad.

I usually sat with them of evenings, and Zenda continued to speak to me with her eyes. Sometimes I would sit on the piano bench with her, my arm touching hers, and from time to time she would turn to look into my face, her own so close that I could feel the warmth of her breath against my cheek; and there would come to me a sudden desire to fling myself into the depths of those moonlit pools and die in thrilling ecstasy.

Still no word passed between us.

Meanwhile, I discovered that there was a considerable ruff in the Tobin lute. There appeared some special bone of contention between them, though naturally I did not know what it was as I always closed the door of my den upon such occasions. But it made my gorge rise to think of my beautiful girl being tied to a man who was uncongenial to her—even brutal.

Zenda was often sad. Several times I caught her crying. But I did not lose control. I pretended not to notice. But I knew that if ever she should appeal to me I would not be able to control myself. It was problematical that I would kill Tobin and end my days in Matteawan.

I now went about as in a daze. Chills chased themselves over my body in rapid succession. I lost appetite, finding food heavy and clogging to the senses.

My teachers began to worry over me and inquire if I were ill. For, though class leader, I had lost all interest in

my studies. In point of fact, I spent most of my study, and many of my recitation periods, floating far above the heads of my classmates among the vaporous clouds of life's greatest call to man.

I had long since given up Morine. At first she had telephoned me constantly, but I thought it kinder not to encourage her madness and told her frankly that I had outgrown her. She showed herself a woman of shallow nature, and shortly after became enamored of a dancing master.

One evening, after the Tobins had been in our home some four weeks, I sat in my den, trying valiantly to concentrate my mind on my favorite Swinburne. I had seen Zenda only at meal-time that day, having for the thousandth time determined that honor demanded that I break off this love of ours.

The Tobins were as usual in the living room, and their voices came to me in a continual buzz, though I could not distinguish what they were saying. Suddenly Mr. Tobin's voice rose angrily:

"I tell you it's got to stop! I've had my fill of that young cub, and I don't propose to be harassed by him any further!"

I sat up stiffly—horrified.

"How can you say that," sobbed Zenda, "when you know I love him?"

"Love be hanged!" snapped her brute of a husband. "I'm sick of his lolling around you, and your defending everything he does! Let him show himself a man instead of a molly-coddle."

Good heavens! They were quarreling over me.

Even in that tragic moment it occurred to me that I would not have believed it possible that Mr. Tobin, a man of dignity and an ambassador of these United States, could condescend to such coarse language. Also, I realized that I should close my door. But it was

not humanly probable, considering that I was so vitally interested. Thus, for the first time, I became an eavesdropper.

"Well," Zenda flared up, "I need *somebody* to show me some tenderness. Heaven knows you never do."

"Nonsense!" Tobin retorted. "There never was, and never will be, any other woman in my life but you, as you very well know, Zenda."

"You might as well not love me for all the affection you show me," she retorted.

I listened in amazement. She had foolishly acknowledged to her husband that she had conceived for me a passion unbecoming to a married woman! It seemed impossible. And yet, women have done strange things in the cause of love; and no man can reckon upon their conduct. They seem to be lacking in that strict sense of propriety which binds man to his social obligations. — But surely she was not proposing to her husband that he permit me to make love to her!

"You are absolutely blind and crazy where that boy is concerned, Zenda!" stormed Tobin.

"I love him, and that's all there is to it. And if you won't——"

"I won't do a damned thing!" broke in the brute grimly. "I've stood all I intend to stand. He can bamboozle you if you like; but if he thinks for one minute that I'm going to put up with his——"

I gently closed my door. Fear of what I might do to the man, were I to hear more, made this advisable. The sounds of their voices came to me from time to time, but I could no longer distinguish the words.

So she loved me! And she had acknowledged it to her husband! My inclination was to rush in and tell her in his presence that, whatever happened, she could count upon me; but common sense told me that such was not ex-

peditions. I must have time to think this matter out as a sane man should. But, somehow, I found sane thought next to impossible. For those little thrills kept chasing over me, as in fancy I held Zenda in my arms.

"Wife!" "Wife!" How that word repeated itself in my brain! Whether marriage would emancipate me or not was a question. But surely my own sister would not be so cruel as to hold me to the meager allowance she now made me, were I a married man!

After a long while, I heard Tobin slam out of the house with the noise of a fish-husband.

I went at once to Zenda. She was stretched on the big divan, her face buried in pillows, sobbing her little heart out. I lifted her gently in my arms. But she drew away—just a shy girl, as she was.

"Don't cry, dear girl," I said, holding onto her hand. "I heard all. And you know you can depend upon me to do whatever is necessary for your happiness. I have not yet reached my majority, but I have money to meet all your needs. You have but to command me."

Such an expression of joy as flooded her small, tearful face, so childlike and sweet!

"Oh, John, dear, I never thought of asking you! Could you loan me five hundred dollars at once?" she asked eagerly.

I must admit that I was somewhat taken aback by the nature of her request. But my next thought reassured me. From hearing my sister and her friends converse together, I had observed with amusement that when a woman loves a man her main thought is how she can get money out of him.

Over and over again had I heard my sister say, though she has an independent fortune in her own right, "I'm going to work Tom for this, or that." And she and her woman friends were always

comparing notes with reference to taking money away from their husbands. In fact, it appeared to be, after the servant question, the chief topic of conversation.

"Any amount you need," I returned impulsively. Then a hideous sinking of the heart assailed me at recollection of the fact that it was near the end of the month and my allowance would not be due for five days! "Do you mean—to-night?" I inquired uneasily.

"No, to-morrow," she gasped. "Oh, John, can you really let me have it?"

With a chill reflection that inefficiency as a money getter on the part of a husband or a lover appeared the one unforgivable sin with the women of Edna's circle, I said quietly:

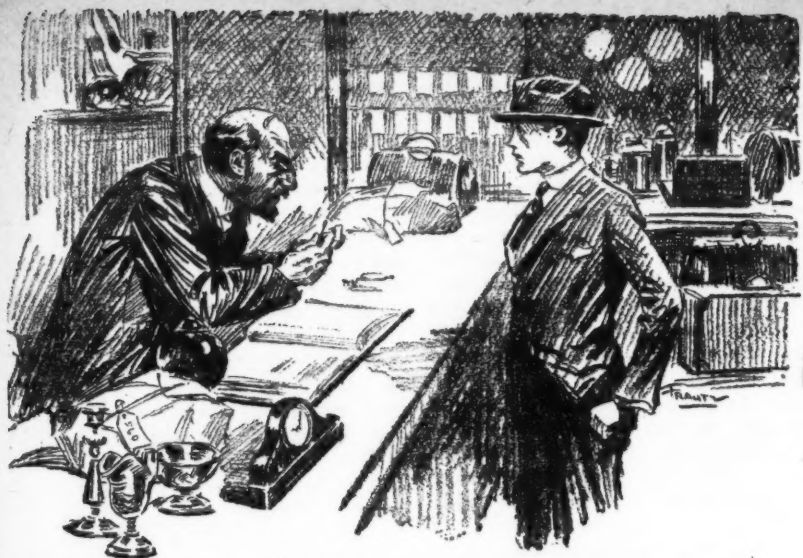
"I'll see if I can arrange it in the morning, dear."

A servant interrupted us; but Zenda pressed my hand. "You darling boy!" she whispered. And it was as if all her troubles had passed. She left me with a radiant smile.

As you may imagine, I did not sleep that night, but tossed all through the long hours, the victim of stony emotions. Also, I was greatly perturbed over the matter of the money which I must somehow raise in the morning. I felt that I could borrow a few dollars from various chaps of my acquaintance; but as they would probably be in the same fix as myself at this time of the month, I could not count upon any great assistance from them. As I pondered, there came to me presently, almost as if by inspiration, the thought of certain places where one could obtain money on one's jewelry. I had a handsome watch, several more or less valuable stickpins, and a pair of diamond cuff links, which would undoubtedly fetch the desired amount.

Having thus arrived at something, I fell into a fitful sleep.

The following morning, not wishing



He eyed my stick pins and cuff links, going behind the counter and getting one of those magnifying glasses, such as jewelers use, fitting it into his eye, and examining the stones minutely.

to meet the family—for obvious reasons—I rose early, gathered up my various articles of jewelry, and descended the stairs, hoping to meet no one. As I hurried past the conservatory, a woman ran squarely into my arms.

With a little squeal, she drew back, and I fairly gasped at sight of her. She was not so tall as Zenda, but of the same slender build and much the same type except that her hair was more like spun gold, lacking the ashen shades so pronounced in Zenda's hair. Her mouth was not so large and her complexion, instead of the excessive paleness of my love, was like the inside of a conch shell just washed up on the shore and all fresh with the dew of the sea. Her eyes were the same moonlit pools, deep and dangerous, but laughing, teasing—as Zenda's were not. In short, if Zenda was as thrillingly beautiful as a sunset, this little crea-

ture was radiant dawn, with its soft unveilings of rose all shot with gold.

"Are you John?" cried the vision, in a little, gasping way.

"Yes," I returned in astonishment, which, however, did not rob me of my facile tongue. "And are you the spirit of Dawn?"

She laughed gayly; then put her hand over her mouth.

"No, I'm Zenda's baby sister," she whispered. "She wrote me about her quarrel with Dan, day before yesterday, and I knew it was sure to hang fire for two or three days, so I ran in to town to cheer her up and coax Dan. Sometimes I can manage him better than she can. I got in on the early train and they don't know I'm here yet. Sh——"

"How did you know who I was?" I asked.

"Oh, Zenda wrote me about you. She's mad over you."

"Then you know all?"

"Yes."

I held out my hand. She grasped it understandingly, and ran away in that same birdlike fashion Zenda had.

After fortifying myself with a substantial breakfast at a restaurant in the Forties, it came to me that Zenda's baby sister was a little witch, but a most beautiful one. I went over on Seventh Avenue, where I had noticed signs inviting one to come in and obtain money.

Upon entering one of these loaning stores, I was met by a wizened, little old man, who kept rubbing his hands together after the fashion of one of Dickens' characters, Uriah Heep, the while he bowed and smiled most graciously. Evidently it was going to be easy to obtain the sum I needed from this friendly person.

"How much can I get on these?" I said. Taking my wallet from my pocket, I handed him the jewelry.

He turned the watch over, and I saw disappointment shoot across his face. Pointing a bony finger to my monogram, he handed it back to me.

"You mean you won't loan me anything on it?" I asked.

He shook his head; then answered curtly: "Couple-a-dollar."

I disdainfully returned the watch to my pocket, the while he eyed my stick pins and cuff links, going behind the counter and getting one of those magnifying glasses, such as jewelers use, fitting it into his eye, and examining the stones minutely. Finally he laid them all down on the counter with an air of indifference.

"Sixty dollar," he said.

I reached for them, but his hand was quicker than mine.

"Seventy," he said tersely.

I shook my head. For several seconds he continued to raise his bids, and I continued to refuse silently.

"Ninety," he announced finally; "not another cent."

And to prove to me that he meant business this time, he removed his hand, leaving me free to take them or leave them as I chose.

"Make it a hundred and I'll say all right."

He silently gathered up the jewelry, put it in a little envelope, wrote on it, gave me a pasteboard check and a hundred-dollar bill, then promptly turned his back on me.

Looking about, I saw a sign which said: "*We take clothes. Anything.*"

"How much will you let me have on this suit I wear?" I asked. "It cost a hundred dollars."

He reached out his clawlike hand, picked up a corner of my coat, and examined the material. "Ten dollar."

His manner infuriated me, but whatever happened I must get that money. I reflected that if I were to let him have twenty-five of my suits I would still have five left, which would do until I could obtain my allowance and redeem my clothing. Twenty-five times ten would be two hundred and fifty dollars. And I had one hundred, leaving only another hundred and fifty to raise, which I felt I could get on my car, even though a recent smash-up had put it in the class of "junk," it being now in the garage for sale.

I am not a Beau Brummel person, but I admit to a certain meticulousness in dress, and I felt really depressed over giving up so many of my suits. But, I reflected, in two and one-half months, if I should not spend a cent otherwise, I could redeem them. Anyhow, *I had to do it!* I couldn't disappoint Zenda.

Without wasting further words on the old man, I went home in a taxi, telling the man to wait outside for me. And it was but a matter of a very few minutes before twenty-five of my best and, if I do say it, rather handsome suits were packed in suit cases. I carried them down to the taxi without encountering anybody on my way.

At eleven o'clock that morning I returned to my home, a triumphant man. It was a disappointment to me to find Zenda out; but I felt that this was as well, as it might have proved embarrassing to her had I handed her the money direct.

So, with what I considered fine tact, I went into my den and, taking a large envelope from my desk, inclosed the

bills therein, sealed and addressed them to Zenda, and carried them up to her room—those rooms breathing of her dear presence. I set the envelope against the mirror of her dressing table so she must see it the first thing upon coming into the room, it being a custom of woman always to rush at once to the mirror to see that the hat she is about to remove has been at the proper angle. I had sometimes wondered at the psychology of this inspection after there was no longer any need to appear well. Now I was glad I had remarked it.

And now that there was nothing more to do, a curious revulsion of feeling assailed me. I had pawned twenty-five of my best suits *in a lump*, and I could not redeem them for two and a half months! *Not even then, if I spent a single cent.* What if Zenda should want more money, meantime! And why had I not pawned those suits separately, so I could at least rescue one



I lifted my leaden arms to enfold her, when I saw, to my horror, the grim figure of her husband looming in the doorway.

of them? I wondered if Zenda's baby sister would have demanded all that money of me? I didn't believe she would. She had such kind eyes.

I heard the women come in and go upstairs at about two o'clock, and, peeping out of my den, I suddenly realized that Zenda looked washed out beside her baby sister. I put the disloyal thought from me! And, with heart pounding, I felt it best to get myself out of the house.

But it was impossible that I could stay away forever. Also, as I had had two meals that day in restaurants and hadn't a cent of money left, I considered it advisable to go home for dinner. After all, it was my house, and if Mr. Tobin objected to my presence it was his place to get out. So, putting on a brave front, I turned toward the Drive, at five-thirty, which would give me time to dress.

Upon entering the door, however, I recollected that I was already wearing my best suit, and I repaired to my den to await dinner, though I wasn't hungry.

I had begun to wonder what on earth I was going to do about this marriage. No clothes! No money! I believe it is true that "when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." Truly there is nothing so tragic as a dead love!

I heard a movement behind me; then I saw Zenda framed in the doorway. My heart did not leap as always at sight of her, but I rose to meet her, determined to do my duty like a man.

"Oh, you darling boy!" she cried. Whereupon she rushed at me and kissed me loudly upon my right cheek, just as Edna does when she is especially pleased with me. I abominate loud kissing, but I lifted my leaden arms to enfold her, when I saw, to my horror, the grim figure of her husband looming in the doorway. Being a large man, he, of course, had all the physical advantage; but I did not stop to con-

sider this. No man of my family has ever shown the white feather. There was but one thing for me to do, as it then appeared; and whatever happened as a result, I flatter myself that I did it like a gentleman.

I stepped forward to meet him.

"Mr. Tobin, sir," I said with manly dignity, but with sinking spirits, "you are at liberty to take whatever steps you see fit. I am a wealthy man in my own right, though I have not yet attained my majority. And I shall feel honored, sir, to become the husband of your wife."

Mr. Tobin stood as if paralyzed, his face absolutely blank.

"What's that you say?" he asked in a foolish, futile way.

"It is not necessary for me to repeat my words," I retorted. "I think you heard me."

Whereupon he did a curious thing. Taking a couple of steps into the room—I thought perhaps he had some notion of striking me, and I like to reflect that I did not retreat an inch—his tall body swayed suddenly as if he were about to faint, and he seemed to fairly slide downward and into a near-by chair, doubling up as he did so and emitting a most curious sound.

It was perhaps a second before I realized that the man was laughing! Up-roariously! And outrageously! In a manner most unseemly for a United States diplomat. Also, I heard a strange, choking sound back of me. Turning to Zenda, I found her both laughing and crying at the same time. Instantly, however, she stepped forward and put an arm around my neck, in the very presence of her husband.

"Oh, Dan!" she cried. "He is the dearest, sweetest boy that ever lived, in spite of everything else!"

Even in that moment I noted that her touch brought no thrill, but I slipped a protecting arm around her.

"He has just loaned me the five

hundred dollars you refused me," she went on, still addressing him.

"You see, John," she said to me, "we have a son in college who is very different from you, who always say and do the right thing. He's always saying and doing the wrong thing; and three times this year we have kept him from being expelled. The other day, he and some of the other boys demolished a picture house, and the faculty taxed them for damages—eleven hundred dollars each, or they'd be expelled. I've been spending so much money this month that my allowance was down to six hundred, and Clinton's father refused to help him out; so you see, my darling boy, what you've done for me!"

"Son!" I stammered. "But you—you aren't old—enough to have a son—in college." My mind was in a kind of whirl.

"I'm thirty-five years old," she returned gently. "Clinton was born when I was eighteen. You see he is a *smart* boy to be in college at seventeen. And he is my idol. Even if he isn't always a good boy, he is wonderful to me—so tender and affectionate."

She kept her arm around my neck, and I was too dazed to move away.

"Have you sent the money to him, Zenda?" asked Mr. Tobin, who was having a time with himself to recover his scattered dignity.

"Yes, I wired it this afternoon."

"So did I," said Tobin.

Instantly she left me and flew to him, perching herself on his knees and kissing him effusively on cheeks and mouth and forehead.

With what dignity I could summon, and—I must admit it—a great sense of relief, I got myself out of the room, leaving them to their foolish love-making, which really is a rather disgusting sight in folk who have been married for eighteen years.

I was hurrying through the living room toward the stairway when some one called my name.

"Oh, John," came a soft voice from the direction of a big window in which was an alcove, with a window seat hidden behind the silk draperies.

Ensclosed in a dinner frock of some cloudy material, which made her look like an exquisite miniature against the mulberry cushions, was Zenda's baby sister, her spreading skirts all fluffed out, and her pale-gold hair a halo above her head. She motioned me to sit beside her.

"It was darling of you to lend sister that money," she whispered, turning her exquisite face up to me.

I kissed her squarely on the lips. It was really quite unexpected to me.

"Oh! You shouldn't!" she gasped, her face more than ever like the heart of a conch shell. "You know, we aren't really acquainted, yet. We only met this morning."

"Love," I returned gravely, "knows no time. It is a strange, mysterious, and misunderstandable thing."

She laughed in appreciation. I flatter myself that coining a word and making an epigram in the same sentence is a rare achievement.

And I had acquitted myself with honor.





The Rehabilitation of Mr. Murphy

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Big Thing," "The Footpath Way," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

A real story of real people, told with the sympathetic insight that characterizes everything Anne O'Hagan writes.

WHEN Mary Ellen Murphy first applied to our district office for assistance, I was assigned to the task of investigating her. Could we blamelessly supply the aid she said she required? Or had she relatives upon whom the duty of succor should be laid? The information about her on the office slip was meager. A neighbor, across the hall in the Janetta Lane tenement, had merely supplied her name, with the statement that she was sick and without food or funds.

I was familiar enough with the district by that time to know that the appearance of Janetta Lane bore no resemblance to its name. The tenements that stood upon it were of the old school. They were built before the city had awakened to the fact that tenements were so much a feature of its life as to require laws for their restraint. The enterprising landlords of Janetta Lane had reared their unhygienic, horrible monuments of greed before that date, and of course no law could be so unjust as to command the destruction of that sacred object, private property. So, in Janetta Lane, it was merely the things our civilization holds less sacred which were daily destroyed—privacy,

decency, health, family life, every vague idea of beauty. This was true even of the buildings fronting on Janetta Lane. But the condition of those in the rear was worse. It was in one of the rear tenements that I found Mary Ellen Murphy.

I had been working for the Consolidated Charities only a few months. That must be my excuse. Now, of course, after years of being employed by them, no one could bamboozle me. Not that Mary Ellen tried to, poor soul! Her room, on the fourth floor, had one window which gave upon about seven feet of yard. It was very dark, very bare, quite dirty. I think the feature that made the most impression on me was the constant "drip drip" from the tap in the iron sink outside her door. It depressed me so that I interrupted my stern investigation of Mary Ellen to try to turn it off.

But it was at that state of disrepair where complete closing was impossible. And Mary Ellen's door was awry upon its hinges so that it, also, refused to close tightly. Our interview, therefore, was to the accompaniment of the dreadful "drip drip."

Mary Ellen, who was very thin, with

lovely, large gray eyes beneath her sunken temples, and a charming, timid smile about her pale lips, was, in the first place, distressed to have troubled me, and, in the second place, insistent upon my promise not to send her to a hospital. If she could only have a little help to tide her over this illness, which—bad cess to it—had interfered with her work, she would be all right again. No, she had no relatives to whom she could appeal. Was she married? I asked.

Mary Ellen had maintained quite a delightful flow of talk up to that moment. But at the question she fell silent.

"I have to ask you, you know," I told her. "Not that it would make any difference, I suppose, to the Consolidated Charities, if you weren't. It isn't a question of morality——"

"What are you talking about, miss?" demanded Mary Ellen hotly. "Sure I'm a married woman. I've me lines to prove it by. An' you can see here by the mark on me finger"—she thrust a wasted hand out toward me and I saw the white depression from a ring long worn upon her wedding finger—"that it's not three days since I left off me wedding ring. It'll be the first thing I get back when I'm earnin' me little bit again."

"Are you a widow?" I asked her.

"God knows," answered Mary Ellen, after she waged a losing fight with the inclination not to answer me.

"What do you mean by that?"

Mary Ellen looked at me, and her charming smile wavered across her worn face.

"Excuse me, miss, but you're not married yourself? Of course not, or you wouldn't be askin' me what I mean when I say somethin' that means I don't know nothin' at all about a man. Am I a widow? Please God, no. But there's no tellin'. He's got a quick temper, an' when he's had a drop too

much, he doesn't mind who he tackles in a bit of an argument."

"Is he working?" I demanded. It was perhaps rather a dull question to put to a woman who had just stated that she did not know whether or not her husband was alive. Out of it came the information that Mary Ellen had not seen her husband for some ten months. He had left her, not for the first time, before the birth of a baby. Mary Ellen turned her face away from me and hid it in her crooked arm and let the sobs that shook her shoulders answer me as to what had become of the baby.

"Murphy, Mary Ellen, aged thirty-four, b. Ireland, m. Thomas Murphy, eleven years ago; nine children, all dead; husband periodical deserter. Hasn't seen him for ten months. Scrub-woman Colonial Building, does laundry work for several ladies in Mrs. Babcock's boarding house. Sick for five weeks. No relatives in this country. No coal, no wood, no funds, no food. Fights vigorously against suggestion of hospital. Recommendation: immediate aid."

That was my report on the case. My superiors pointed out to me that I showed the weakness of extreme youth in not having called an ambulance and bundled Mary Ellen into it. But, after all, they were not totally calloused in our branch of the C. C.'s; and besides, the free hospitals were crowded that winter. So they gave me some money to spend on my case, and I went back laden with necessities for her immediate use.

She was quite a wonderful person, Mary Ellen. For she managed, though an object of municipal charity, to be grateful without servility. She was grateful, volubly, eagerly so. The volubility was partly due to the rising temperature which colored her thin cheeks with a simulation of health. I busied myself in making her a little beef broth

and custard. As I look back upon the years of my bleak almonership, it seems to me that she was the only one of all the C. C.'s beneficiaries who ever succeeded in giving to the transaction between us the semblance of a natural, neighborly service.

The next morning she did not look so well. The evening fever had died down and left her ashen and dull. But she roused herself to combat the hospital idea with great fervor. A neighbor from across the hall promised to look in every hour upon her, and I let the matter rest. I continued to let it rest for nearly a month. I have admitted that I was somewhat sentimental in those days, and I found that one of Mary Ellen's reasons for fighting against removal to a hospital was her desire to remain in the place where Thomas Murphy had left her until his wandering steps might, possibly, bring him there again. At that period of my life the reason was perfectly cogent.

Mary Ellen became one of my great pets. I went to see her almost every day. I took to reading to her—I don't know how much of the thought she followed, but the flow of words seemed soothing to her. She had a particular fondness for poetry, and so had I. It quieted her. Frequently she dozed off asleep while I read to her. I confess that the things which I read were chosen to suit my own taste and not literary preferences which I discovered in Mary Ellen. Minor verse, all sad cadences and delicate wistfulness, was my passion at that time. So it was on minor verse that I fed the mind and heart of the sad, wistful, sick woman. And all the time I kept seeing her as the girl she had been when Thomas Murphy had wooed her—gay, elusive, yearning for love and yearning for him, but tormenting him, and herself, too, by pretended withdrawals. How pretty she must have been then! She was so pretty yet, even marred by work and

suffering and the incalculable agony of watching her children die! How full of fine charm she must have been, since years of drudgery, even the bitterness of charity, could not utterly quench the spark of charm!

"Good night, good night, Heart's Dearest!
The Hunter holds the sky.
Wakes not a soul in Sherwood
Save Little John and I——"

I have forgotten now who wrote the lines—the song of Robin Hood keeping watch in Sherwood Green over the grave of Maid Marian. But I liked them. I only felt the loneliness and longing of a lover whose dear one's springing step no longer touched the grasses. I suppose I read with some feeling, for my heart was full of it. At any rate, Mary Ellen interrupted me:

"Say it again, miss, please—the Hunther holds the sky——"

I read it again, and she repeated the lines after me dreamily.

"Ah," she breathed at the end, "but there was the grand hunthers' moon at home in the old country in the fall o' the year—— Who would it be that's supposed to be sayin' the words, miss?"

I gave her a shortened version of the story of the Merry Men of Sherwood.

"They was good times," she declared when I finished. "Good times—would it be too much trouble for ye to read it again, miss?"

So I read it again:

"'Twixt thee and me the grasses
Are soft and thick and green.
And falls a drift of hawthorn
O'er Sherwood's buried queen."

"The hawthorn!" said Mary Ellen ecstatically. "You don't be havin' it in this country, do you, miss? Seems to me like I could smell it now."

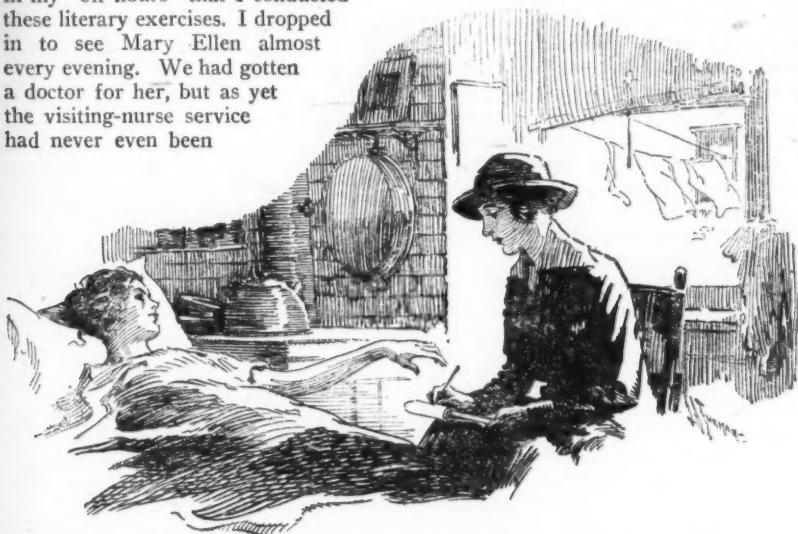
I was glad that the power of imagination was so strong in her. Certainly the odors that came seeping in from the hall were no aid to the memory in re-

creating a beautiful and beloved impression.

The poem, being one of her favorites, I read to her at almost every visit. Of course the Consolidated Charities did not pay my salary for devoting myself exclusively to Mary Ellen Murphy, nor was the reading of melancholy verse supposed to be included in my duties as investigator and almoner. It was in my "off hours" that I conducted these literary exercises. I dropped in to see Mary Ellen almost every evening. We had gotten a doctor for her, but as yet the visiting-nurse service had never even been

the stairs. He was sitting there, and he had the air of having been there for some time. The sounds of Janetta Lane were many, and the medley of noises that arose in the graceless place of Mary Ellen's abode was such that I would not notice a creak more or less upon the stairs.

The man, large, loose-jointed, stood up to allow me to pass, then he creaked



"You can see here by the mark on me finger that it's not three days since I left off me wedding ring."

heard of in our city, and the doctor's recommendations—perfunctory ones, for her end was obviously near and inevitable—were made to a German neighbor across the hall, the mother of six. Mrs. Hoeber was one of the kindest women in the world, but she was not enough of a superwoman to be able to give Mary Ellen such attention as she needed.

One night as I left—choking with the conviction that not many more nights remained for me to visit my "case"—I stumbled into a man at the top of

down the stairs behind me. Near the bottom he called to me surlily:

"Wait a minute, can't you?"

I turned in the narrow entry, with the torn oilcloth affording pitfalls for unfamiliar feet, and I looked at him.

"What is it?" I asked. I had been long enough with the Consolidated Charities to have lost the habit of feminine tremors at rough salutations from men.

"Whose place was that you just came out of?" he demanded.

I looked at him closely. There was

about him some remnant of youthful good looks. 'He was an Irishman of the burly, red type, and, although Mary Ellen had never described her husband to me, I knew that it was he. So I countered his question with another:

"You are Mr. Thomas Murphy, aren't you?"

"I may be, an' then again I may not," he answered warily. I thought I could detect in his manner a cautious resolve not to commit himself to one who might be an agent of the law, some one who could hold him up for money for his abandoned wife, or, failing that, could clap him into jail.

"I guess there is no doubt about it," I said. "You are Thomas Murphy. Your wife, who lives in the room I just left, is very sick."

"Mary Ellen?" he repeated unbelievably, thereby setting any question of his identity entirely at rest.

"Yes, Mary Ellen. The wife whom you abandoned——"

"Mary Ellen's never been sick all the years we've been married," he told me belligerently.

"She's had nine children!" I cried with a fierce onslaught of feminine rage against the unbelievable stupidity of the male.

"She was never in bed more than two or three days with one of them," he flung back at me.

"How do you know? You generally left home before they were born."

"Who are you?" he demanded, angry in his turn. "Who are you comin' and pryin' into our affairs?"

I told him who I was, and that, I think, convinced him that I spoke the truth about Mary Ellen's health. Then it was against me that he turned, not against himself.

"An' if all you tell me is true, it's a pity the best you can be doin' for her is to sit there readin' poethry. Gallopin' consumption, you say—an' all the medicine you're givin' her is——" He

twisted his unshaven lips into a sneer and repeated the lines I had been reading to Mary Ellen. "'Twixt thee an' me the grasses are soft an' thick an' green, an' falls a drift of hawthorn——' What good do you think the like of that will be for a cough?"

I replied with some of the decision and force which have since brought me to higher places in the councils of the C. C. The aggressive Mr. Murphy was reduced to a semiapologetic pulp by the time I had finished. But not even in that subdued condition was he malleable. I, of course, pointed out to him his duty and offered to go back and gently break the news of his return. But it seemed that he had no intention whatever of going in to see Mary Ellen. He seemed to me then an unmitigated brute. Now that I am older and wiser in the ways of primitive man, I understand him, perhaps, a little better. Mr. Thomas Murphy stood in affright before the great, fundamental facts of nature. He fled his home before the birth of his children. He would not risk being present when his wife died. He was the savage, hiding terror-stricken eyes before the unappeasable lightning bolts. The mysterious coming of life and death—these great miracles—what had Thomas Murphy, ignorant compound of appetites and irresponsibilities, to do with them?

I threatened all sorts of things, arrest, incarceration, the judgment of his peers, but these had no weight in his mind against the stark fact that he might have to see his wife die if he were rash enough to enter her room. He obligingly turned out his tattered pockets to show me that he would be of no financial use. He had come home, apparently, expecting support rather than intending to bestow it. Yet empty as his pockets were, it was obvious that Mr. Murphy had recently been able to procure for himself a potent measure of alcohol.

Mary Ellen's remaining days were few, and I could not bear to have them saddened or perturbed unendurably by the knowledge of the recalcitrant Thomas' proximity. So I did not mention him either to her or to the head of the district, who would have shown more firmness of character in dealing with him and in impounding him than I had shown.

I brought Mary Ellen all the dole the organization allowed me, and I added to it from my own little stores, and I spent with her all the time I could spare from my work. And every evening at her request I read to her the poem, the lament of the lover who had lived so long ago in the clean, green forest above the grave of his heart's delight. Sometimes she used to say the lines after me, smiling mistily the while. And almost every evening when I came out from the miserable, barren, malodorous, little room, I found Thomas Murphy waiting on the top stair, a little more ragged, a little more sodden, a little more hostile to me, at each meeting. At the street door I would curtly give him the evening's report on his wife's condition together with a few words embodying my opinion of him, and then I would pass out into the murk and noise of Janetta Lane, and he would follow close at my heels. At the corner we would lose each other, to meet and repeat the performance the next night.

Two days before Mary Ellen died, I was called out of the city by imperative family affairs. I left detailed explanations and prayerful entreaties in the office as to the conduct of the case, but when I came back, after two weeks, I found that there had been a miscarriage in arrangements. By some bungling my substitute in the district had failed to connect with Mary Ellen the last two days. She had died, and she had been buried in potter's field. When I harangued the office hysteri-

cally, my chief took me by the shoulders and dealt with me firmly.

"You might as well realize in the beginning as in the end," she told me, "that you will be a failure in the C. C., and a nervous wreck in the bargain, if you attempt to deal with your cases on this basis of personal affection. Of course I am sorry, this time, that we slipped up on your Mary Ellen Murphy and didn't notice what you said in your note about being responsible for her burial expenses. But you can't do the work on any such principle, and, after all, I'm not sure that I *am* sorry about her. You might as well begin first as last. All the funds of the C. C. wouldn't hold out if we were going to treat each case like that of a friend."

"But she was my friend!" I stormed. "So delicate, so fine, so appreciative——"

"You'll find they all have wonderful qualities, my dear," said the chief softly, releasing my shoulders and shaking her head at me.

I went about on my day's calls with a lump of lead in my breast and chains upon my feet. That night I went to Mrs. Hoerber's to learn anything I might about Mary Ellen's end. It had been peaceful enough, and the good woman cried as she told me how hard it had been for her to see her neighbor's body taken away by the city's indifferent servants. I inquired if she had noticed the big, burly Irishman who had haunted the halls before I left town. She had not, she said.

But when I came out into the thick darkness of Janetta Lane, he was waiting for me by the door of one of the saloons that punctuated its brief length. He was more respectful, more ingratiating than he had ever been before. He thanked me for the friendship I had shown his wife. He spoke with clumsy shame of his own treatment of her. He even referred to the poem she had loved to hear.

"She was always a great-hand for songs an' the moon an' flowers an' the like," he told me—poor Mary Ellen, who finally went out in the flowerless squalor of a Janetta Lane! "Twas like her to have ye read to her about them. I've no sort of a mim'ry mesilf, but them lines ye were readin' to her of an evenin'—I liked them mesilf. "Twixt me an' thee, the grasses——' How does it go, ma'am?"

Somewhat impatiently I told him. This maudlin sentimentality in a wife deserter did not appeal favorably to me. But he seemed oblivious to the brusqueness of my manner, the severity of look, as he stumbly repeated the words two or three times:

"Twixt thee and me the grasses
Are soft and thick and green.
And falls a drift of hawthorn
O'er Sherwood's buried queen."

After he had, apparently, imprinted them upon his memory, he blurted out a request that I lend him some money. Before I could indignantly refuse he hurried on with a story of his determination to lead a new life, of an op-



"Whose place was that you just came out of?" he demanded.

portunity to begin it as a coachman to a gentleman in the suburbs, provided only he could make a decent appearance in applying for the job—he knew horses—liked horses, understood them. "Me an' thim get along together fine," he said.

I told him I did not believe in the existence of the gentleman in the suburbs although I could not declare an

equal skepticism about his accomplishments as a hostler. Mary Ellen had boasted of them to me. "A grand hand with all sorts of crathers," she said; and, sighing: "If we could have had a bit of a place in the counthry maybe everything would have been different."

Thomas met my incredulity as to the possibility of the suburban job by a prompt offer to present to me, at any place I might choose to designate, and at any hour of the next day, the friend through whom the position was to be obtained, no less a person than the retiring coachman. He seemed very eager. He spoke of what would be Mary Ellen's wishes, and he called my attention to the tatterdemalion state of his apparel.

"I couldn't show mesilf in a dacint place, miss, in the likes of these." He pointed to the yawning shoes tied on with odds and ends of cord, he indicated the absence of a shirt beneath his greasy, ragged, buttoned overcoat. His blue eyes, less bloodshot than ever before, gazed into mine with an agony of appeal under the arc light at the corner. I wavered, weakened—

"Very well," I capitulated, as ungraciously as possible. "Let me see the man you've talked of, here, at half past twelve to-morrow afternoon. And—if what you say is so, I *may*—mind you, I don't promise, I only say I *may*—help you. For your wife's sake."

He called on God to bless me and jubilantly promised to bring his friend, the outgoing coachman of the suburban estate. As I walked off, half ashamed of my weakness, I actually thought I heard him repeating: "'Twixt thee and me the grasses—"

The suburban coachman proved an indisputable fact, a solemn, red-faced, full-fed man with clean-shaven jowls and with a faint fragrance of barns clinging to his respectable clothing. He vouched for all that Thomas Murphy had said, spoke to me with the defer-

ence of one who knew, without loss of self-respect, his proper place and mine in the hierarchy of the social order, and explained his interest in Thomas Murphy on the ground that they had both come from Carrighdare in the County Down. Whereupon I turned over to him, as responsible trustee, the fifty dollars I had collected and laid aside for Mary Ellen's funeral expenses. After all, her husband's rehabilitation would be more to Mary Ellen's liking than any pomp of interment!

Two days later, at the office, I was told that Daniel Rooney wished to see me, and, betaking myself to the hall where applicants for relief were herded on benches, I found among them the red-faced coachman. He was greatly perturbed. He had come, he said, to announce the miscarriage of our plans for the restoration of Thomas Murphy to the wage-earning world.

"I ought never to have let him had it, mem," he said. "I ought never to have let it out of me own fist. But I did. To me shame be it said, I did. Sure ye'd have thought it safe yersilf, ma'am—in front of the Three Little Tailors on Water Street it was, an' him sayin' he didn't want to be led in like a little bye be his mother— It sounded reasonablelike, mem, an' so I give it into his own hand—as I'd have been done by, mem, if it was me. Well, he didn't come out—an' afther a due time I went in lookin' for him. Mem, he'd bought nothin', nothin' at all, nothin' whatever, but had gone right through the store to the back door on Port Street—an' that's the last I saw of him. An' me promisin' me master, Mr. Kilbairn, that I'd a good man, knowledgeable wid horses, for to take me place!"

What I said to Mr. Rooney I have forgotten. I was angry, of course, but even in my youth and inexperience I had a rudimentary knowledge of character and a sense of justice. I saw that

Rooney was 'an honest fellow, though dull, and not an accomplice of Thomas Murphy's. I don't believe that among the things I have to regret in my past is any undue harshness to the coachman from Carrighdare, County Down. But I could have bitten nails as I walked back to my desk.

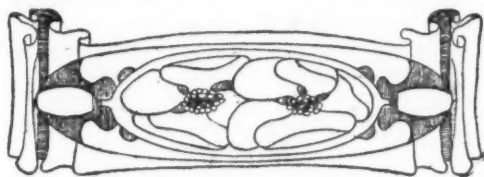
Three days later a dirty, creased envelope, with my name misspelled, lay upon it when I came in in the morning. I opened it gingerly. It was not the sort of missive one took up boldly, welcomingly. As I lifted it I thought I caught a faintly alcoholic odor, and sniffing at one of the stains which discolored it, I knew that I had not been mistaken.

I took out the inclosures. There were two of them. Both were receipts.

One was from Mt. St. Aloysius' Cemetery. "Received from Thomas Murphy, ten dollars, in payment of one plot"—of consecrated earth defined, located, and described in all its tiny detail. And the second was from Hugh Slevin, undertaker, acknowledging the payment on the part of Mr. Thomas Murphy for a coffin and the transfer of Mary Ellen Murphy's body from the potter's field to Mt. St. Aloysius' Cemetery.

Nothing else was in the whisky-stained envelope. But I seemed to hear, as I slid the explanatory receipts into their dirty receptacle, the hoarse voice of Thomas Murphy, as he mumbled:

"Twixt thee and me the grasses
Are soft and thick and green——"



SOME DAY

SOME day," he said, "after I have won fame and fortune I will tell her of my love. Some day, when I am more worthy to approach one so pure in heart, so noble in mind and character, so strangely loving and beautiful, I will kneel before her and lay the fruits of my toil at her feet.

"Then she may smile upon me and give me rest, and shine, my guiding star in the beautiful casket I must provide for such a jewel.

"With this to hope and pray for, I will toil patiently through the long years to come, my eyes ever fixed on the great reward that may some day be mine."

"Some day," said another man, "after I have grown tired of this gay bachelor life I am now leading, I will marry her and settle down. True, she is not my style of a companion, and I would not give one pouting kiss from the red lips of the one I love for a whole life of devotion from her; but then she suits my mother, can entertain my friends, and has the cash.

"Then, if married life proves too much of a sameness, why there is the club, where I can sit in a quiet corner and think of the past."

One day two crowns lay at her feet. One was fashioned from the leaves of the oak and laurel, and spoke of noble deeds and fame. The other was a tangled mass of wild oats and the bitter rue, but the woman, with a cry of joy, grasped it with her hands and pressed it to her heart.

SARA WHITE ISMAN.



Well-Groomed Hands

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE world, as we know it, is daily becoming smaller. Individual barriers are disappearing, and in consequence we are demanding more of each other. Above all things we are demanding *personal cleanliness* and that minute attention to the care of the body which we often summarize in the term "well-groomed."

Nowhere is this watchfulness more evident than in the hands. Time was when Jack in the stable and Mary Ellen in the kitchen gave no thought to their anatomy beyond satisfying the crudest demands of decency. But to-day Jack and Mary Ellen have been superseded by the uniformed chauffeur and the college-bred mother's assistant, who are frequently more pleasing to the eye, because of their perfect grooming, than those who employ them.

Well-kept hands, with beautifully cared-for nails, are unquestionably an asset and an index of their owner's habits. But to insure perfect nails there *must* be habitual care. Slipshod methods here, as elsewhere, find one unprepared for emergencies, such as a sudden call to dine out, or to take a hand at bridge.

It does not require much time or money to beautify the hands, nor is it necessary that the hand be anatomically perfect to be attractive. One so often sees beautifully shaped hands defiled by gross neglect; and again hands of no special interest from the student's viewpoint, which attract the eye because of their softness, whiteness, and nails that "gleam like jewels rare." A hand that is perfection both as to form and grooming is as rare as a face that startles the beholder with its faultless contour. However, just as Dame Nature casts the features into a different mold for each individual face, so there is a great diversity in the size, shape, and action of the hands, and be they large or small, bony or fat, so long as they are not actually deformed, it is possible, with persistent care, to transform them into things of beauty.

Every woman should study her hands as she does her face. In them lie tremendous possibilities for expression—reposeful or dramatic; for beauty, as a distinguishing feature; insuring the tout ensemble of a well-groomed personality.

Nor must it be forgotten that the hands are a surer indication of age than

the face. Let us remember that the secret of keeping the hands young lies entirely in the daily care bestowed upon them: feeding, nourishing the tissues with creams and emollients as required. Young hands quickly assume an old, withered appearance when their needs are overlooked, and vice versa.

With the advent of cold weather the hands require greater care, because in many instances the circulation is affected and the hands become red and disfigured with blotches. Of first consideration must be the improvement of the general physical condition by enriching the blood. Often, nothing more than corrective hand and arm gymnastics, which increase the local circulation, will abolish the tendency to redness.

Cold absorbs the natural oils of the skin and leaves the hands dry and harsh to the touch. Housework further invites many distressing disfigurements, both of the skin and nails, unless gloves are worn. Why are some women able to do a day's heavy housework and appear at dinner with perfectly groomed hands, while others who do no work to speak of hide their hands with shame "before company?" Carelessness is the only answer.

Blotchiness, discolorations, enlarged pores, chapping, callosities, cracks, broken, dry, brittle, and bruised nails, stains, fissures, all could be obviated if the hands were protected with gloves.

Many women complain that they cannot work with gloves on. This is a matter of cultivation, like everything else. However, the hands must be *protected* from grime, soil, and changes in temperature. Nothing will do this so effectually as rubber gloves for wet work, and heavy cotton gloves for ordinary household tasks. Rubber gloves also protect the skin from injurious effects of strong soap, amoniated powders, and other cleansers essential to good housekeeping.

When the dislike for gloves is greater

than a just consideration for carefully preserved hands, the next best thing is smearing the hands with cold cream and talcum powder before putting them into water or subjecting them to great changes of temperature. A mask of this kind is really surprisingly protective. Always on finishing any work the hands should be rubbed thoroughly with a healing and softening lotion. They respond to this little attention with great readiness. Here is a French lotion suitable for the purpose:

Rose water	6 ounces
Glycerin	½ ounce
Bitter almond water	2½ drams
Tincture of benzoin	2½ drams
Borax	1½ drams

Rub the borax up with the glycerin, gradually adding the rose and almond waters, lastly the tincture of benzoin, agitating the mixture all the time.

Make up a large quantity and keep a supply in the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, and so cultivate the habit of using it after each washing of the hands. In this manner the unpleasant effect of work or of the weather can be effectually counteracted.

When hands, subjected to hard usage, to careless and neglectful treatment, show evidences of chronic soil, the following treatment, *persistently pursued*, will bring about a gratifying change in a short period:

First give the hands a bath of ten minutes in warm water, softened with borax, toilet ammonia, and tincture of green soap. Remove, dry with a soft towel, and employ lemon juice upon any stains or discolorations. Rub the inside of a lemon in and around the nails, also wrap a bit of fine absorbent cotton on the tip of an orange stick, moisten this with pure lemon juice, and clean the corners of the nails, the most frequent site for accumulated soil and stain.

Should hardened skin or callous spots exist, treat these with velvet pumice

stone. Rinse thoroughly in clear waters and anoint the hands with perfumed almond oil, which should be rubbed very thoroughly into every pore, as well as in and around the nails.

The hands of toilers require even more heroic treatment. The following is recommended for dirt which is ground into the pores:

Egg albumen	1 1/4 ounces
Boric acid	1/4 drams
Glycerin	4 ounces
Distilled water, to make	8 ounces
Perfume to suit.	

Dissolve the acid in some of the water, mix this with the remaining ingredients, and strain.

In using, wash the hands in the usual manner, dry on a towel, then moisten lightly but thoroughly with the liquid, and dry on a soft towel. Also apply at night before retiring, wiping slightly to remove superfluous liquid, or better still wear cotton gloves during the night.

The use of cosmetic and medicated gloves should have a place in the toilet armamentarium of every woman who values the beauty of her hands. While these gloves are on sale at many beauty specialists, their price is prohibitive, and they possess no greater virtues than gloves improvised for this purpose at home. Heavy, white cotton or cheap chamois gloves can be used. They must be clean, and they must be several sizes larger than the hands, with holes in each glove to give ventilation.

There are many pastes recommended for this purpose. Of these the following ointment is unquestionably superior, as it is healing, beautifying, and *whitening*:

Bismuth oxychlorid	1 1/2 drams
Zinc oxid	2 1/2 drams
Olive oil	6 drams
Wool-fat, hydrous	15 drams
Glycerin	2 1/2 drams
Rose-water	5 drams

After rubbing this paste into the hands, leave a considerable smear and

draw on the gloves. In the morning, remove with tepid water and apply the French lotion given above.

In olden times honey and almond meal was a favorite combination for hand lotions. It is a very old formula, so old that we do not know its origin, except that it was in high favor with court ladies in the days of the Louis'. It contains: ground barley, the white of an egg, a teaspoonful of glycerin, and an ounce of honey. This may be used as a paste for the hands at bedtime. It is remarkably beautifying to the skin.

Not only does a carefully groomed hand bespeak refinement and cultivated tastes, but it attests to the youth of the individual. It is well known that the hands show traces of age long before the face. Some very young persons are unfortunate in that their hands appear much older than they are. This is caused mainly by neglect or indifference to their needs—for instance, a thin, sensitive skin soon wrinkless, unless it is continually nourished with emollients. Thin, scrawny hands require fattening creams and so on.

Massage is one of the best mediums for improving the tissues, and the hands are no exception. For this purpose one may use simple cocoa butter, or almond oil, or a combination of equal parts of lanolin, cocoa butter, and almond oil.

The hands should first be softened in a bath of warm water, so that the gaping pores will quickly absorb the nourishment furnished by stroking them with the anointed fingers of one hand. One should begin at the finger tips and massé backward toward the wrist; applying the creams liberally to both sides of each hand and with gentle forcible strokes and circular movements work the nourishment into the underlying tissues. When this treatment is pursued with conscientious regularity day after day, thin, scrawny hands, as

well as the sensitive skin, soon show an appreciable improvement.

Red hands are the *bête noire* of many women during cold weather. It is not due to a purely local condition but springs, from a relaxed state of the tiny nerves which supply the blood vessels, and which, in this trouble, cause a relaxation of the arterioles with consequent redness of the skin. Here the constitution needs building up with a view to strengthening the sympathetic nervous system.

For the temporary relief of red hands the following mixture is good:

Lemon juice	3 ounces
White wine vinegar	3 ounces
White brandy	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint

When, for social reasons, red hands are a source of embarrassment, it is altogether permissible, and indeed wise, to *make them up*. This is done by anointing them liberally with a good whitening cream, then rubbing with powdered French chalk. All excess, of course, must be removed. When, in addition to these precautions, the nails are exquisitely manicured, one's mental condition, so far as the hands are concerned, is one of extreme satisfaction, but this treatment must only be carried out on state occasions, because the daily use of French chalk would in time enlarge the pores and coarsen the skin.

Before leaving the subject of red hands, a word must be said on the chapped and inflamed condition so common to some hands during the winter months. Those whose hands come in this category should try:

Salol	1 dram
Menthol	$\frac{1}{2}$ dram
Olive oil	1 dram
Lanolin	30 drams

Mix: Apply two or three times daily.

Salol, an ingredient in the above application, is a combination of carbolic acid and salicylic acid. By virtue of its antiseptic properties, it allays inflammation. Menthol, also an ingredient of

the above application, is a constituent of peppermint oil, and allays pain and itching.

Large, dilated veins are usually conspicuous on thin hands. Raising the hands above the head and subjecting them to massage in this position, not only empties the veins of their contents, fills out the tissues, but tends to contract the blood vessels if suitable preparations are employed. Among these witch-hazel cream holds first place. It is well known that witch-hazel has a specific influence upon enlarged blood vessels. Massage movements that simulate wringing the hands will encourage plumpness of these members, especially if a good fattening cream is used during the process.

While the anatomy of the hand cannot be altered by any process short of surgery, bony hands can be made plumper, stubby fingers longer, and broad, flat finger tips more pointed, if one has the determination to adhere to the simple measures that will bring about so desired a transformation.

The French, past grand mistresses in the art of beautifying the body, originated a device for tapering the fingers. It is built on the order of a clothespin, and, foolish as it may seem to some, the tiny clothespins designed for play nurseries are just the thing to use for this purpose.

When, for any reason, exquisite hands are a business or social asset, no length to which one can go in remolding them is to be ignored. To illustrate: "Mamma's Affair," a play given in New York last winter, had four well-known women in the cast. Of these, she who took perhaps the lesser rôle of all possesses hands of such startling beauty that the eyes of many in the audience followed them constantly when she was on the stage. What care do you suppose this actress devoted to a feature so superlatively attractive, and would she consider it a silly waste of time to

resort to any means in her power to enhance their beauty? Assuredly not.

French actresses are said to have the most beautiful hands in the world. It must be acknowledged that few American women of the stage have anything to boast of in this respect. Few women, either on or off the stage, display the exquisitely kept hands so universal among the French women.

To use the hands with ease and grace is an accomplishment, and a cultivated

repose of the hands is as eloquent of good breeding as are perfect manners. Perhaps more so—for in the rush and hurly-burly of our busy lives, perfect manners often go by the board, and belie us, while the hands tell a story without words. They are a sure index of refined and well-disciplined habits.

NOTE: The nails, in health and disease, will be discussed in the next article.

WHAT READERS ASK

HELEN G.—Healthy hair possesses a luster of its own. Dry, lusterless hair is in need of scalp stimulation, because the oil glands are impoverished. Straight hair cannot be made curly by any process, except that of the so-called "permanent wave." Many sensible women prefer to use bandoline and hair curlers. The use of brilliantine imparts a high glow to the hair. I shall gladly send you directions for making and using both bandoline and brilliantine, if you will send along, with your request, a stamped, addressed envelope.

Miss E. V.—I absolutely disapprove of hair-bleaching agents. Light shades of col-

oring for the hair are produced by an application of rhubarb, combined with honey, but few are able to make the mixture so that it is not sticky. I have a tonic wash for light hair that will also prevent the roots from growing dark. This you may have upon request, if you inclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

FRANK G.—It would require an article to answer you fully; however, upon receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope, I will gladly mail you rules of health, a list of youth-sustaining foods, and such other directions as will put you on the road to "health and happiness."

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, published monthly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1920:

State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is Treasurer of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443 Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publishers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *editor*, Charles A. MacLean, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *managing editors*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *business managers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Street & Smith Corporation, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., a corporation composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.;

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4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

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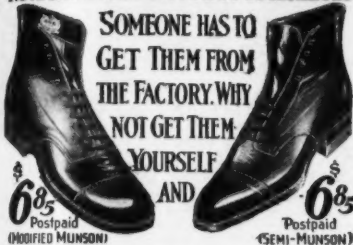
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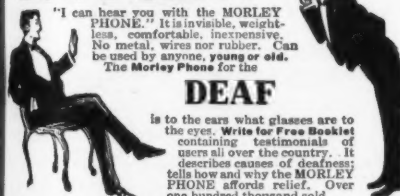
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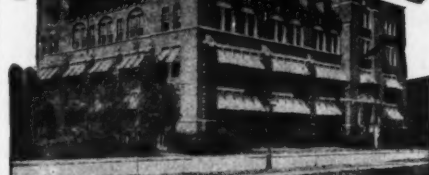


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HAIR CUTTER



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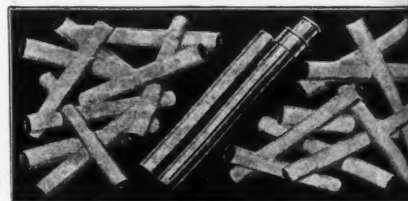
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The McLain Sanitarium is a thoroughly equipped private institution devoted exclusively to the treatment of Club Feet, Infantile Paralysis, Spinal Diseases and Deformities, Hip Disease, Wry Neck, etc., especially as found in children and young adults. Our book, "Deformities and Paralysis"; also "Book of References," free. Write for them.

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for the
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keep it for
10 days**

No. 1

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So perfect—so dazzling—so exactly like a high-priced diamond is this beautiful LIZNITE GEM RING that it is next to impossible to tell the difference. It withstands fire, acid and file tests the same as the finest diamond. Get it today and be the envy of your friends.

The No. 1 Ring, above is full carat weight genuine LIZNITE GEM, extra heavy, handsomely engraved. **SOLID GOLD** ring. Mounting is white gold top, yellow gold shank. Priced at \$21.50. And **not a penny until the ring arrives.**

SEE IT AND WEAR IT AT OUR RISK

This ring or any one of the four others shown here sent immediately on request. The sparkling pure white beauty of genuine LIZNITE GEMS and the exquisite, guaranteed solid gold mountings of these rings surpass anything of the kind you have ever before seen or read about. See for yourself and be convinced.

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Measure the length of a strip of paper that just passes over the second joint of finger on which you want to wear the ring. Be sure to include this measure.

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\$4.50 when ring arrives. \$3 Monthly until balance is paid. Your money cheerfully refunded any time inside of 10 days if you return the ring.

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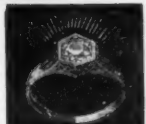
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When Ring arrives I agree to pay \$4.50 and after 10 days, either return the ring or forward \$3.00 monthly until paid for. In case I return the Ring, you will refund the \$4.50 at once. My finger size is _____

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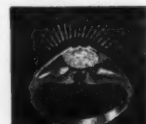
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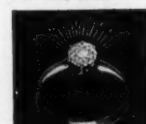
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Directions.
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"Bayer" introduced Aspirin to physicians 20 years ago.

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35c at your druggist's

PISO'S

for Coughs & Colds

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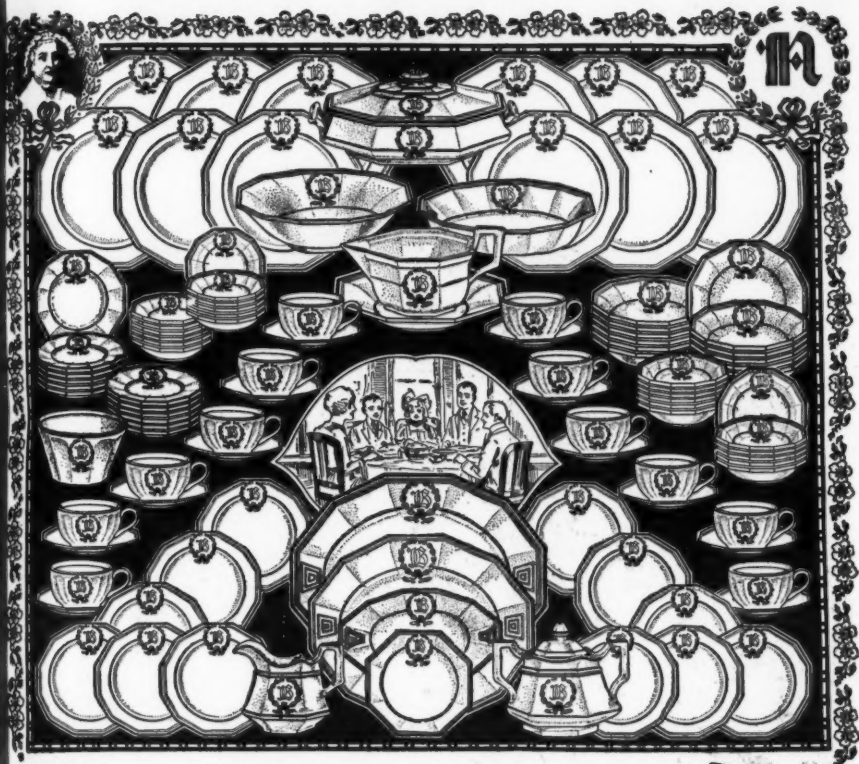
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A few tablets of Pape's Diapepsin correct acidity, thus regulating the stomach and giving almost instant relief. Large 60c case—druggatores.

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How can we hope to give you even a faint idea of the exquisite beauty of this wonderful Golden Martha Washington Dinner Set? A picture can't do it because no picture can show the gleam of heavy, lustrous gold comprising the heavy decoration, or the snowy whiteness of each piece where it glistens through the heavy bands of rich gold and the wreath with your initial monogram also in gold. You must see the distinctive shape—the many and varied artistic indentations—which make this pattern so different from all others. It is a reproduction of the most expensive dinner set made.

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Complete Set Consists of
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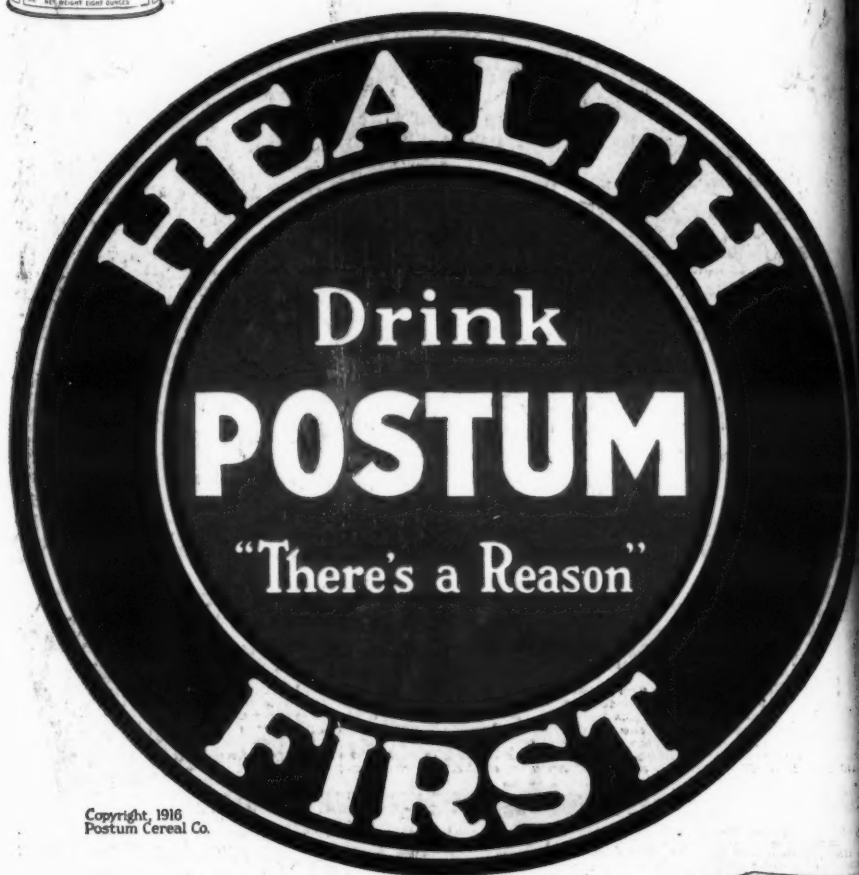
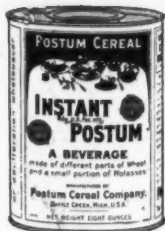
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I enclose \$1.00. Send 110-piece Golden Martha Washington Dinner Set Number 327CMA19. I am to have 30 days' trial. If not satisfied will ship it back and you will refund my \$1.00 and pay transportation both ways. If I keep it I will pay \$3.00 per month until paid, \$35.95 is paid.

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Occupation.....
Give Initial.....
Wanted—Any One Letter.....

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